

Societies across have realized these dangers and therefore growth strategies are made with focus on inclusion. Inclusion in the form of their participation in the growth process and their claims of benefits of growth. Indian strategy of inclusion is aptly manifested in government policy. Various schemes like PM Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Mudra Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, etc. have their primary focus on inclusion, be it financial inclusion or inclusion in the supply chain. With the newly launched PM Jan Arogya, government aims to include poor into the health infrastructure of the country.

Also the universal focus on SDGs like no hunger, no poverty, good health, are all directed to uplift the societies from life of poverty to life of prosperity.

But eradication of poverty requires funding. Funding has to come from within the society. Therefore, rich have to realize that their prosperity depends upon the prosperity of all. They should voluntarily make efforts for the upliftment of downtrodden. Otherwise the truth is – Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

Even Mahatma Gandhi has said that

Real freedom will come when all the people are brought out of poverty.

Consumerism Kills Culture with Overproduction and Heightened Sense of Need Established by the Marketing

Himanshu Kaushik, IAS (CSE 2017)

In Delhi, a capital city with a population of around 12 million, there are 9 million vehicles running on roads. Fifteen million mobile phone connections are currently active. Perhaps Gandhiji was right when he said there is no limit of greed. Philosophers and Reformers like Gandhi wanted world to be a big family, however what we have today is a big market. World is facing overproduction of oil, steel, food especially grains etc. which points out towards the materialistic basis on which our world is built.

The rise of industrial production led to colonization of third world for resources which gave rise to ideology of mass production i.e. capitalism. Capitalism which further needed Globalization for markets created a single market for whole world and hence the phenomenon of consumerism arrived. Multinational companies began expanding their operation to multiple countries, continents bringing with them the dominant ideology of consumerism where irrespective of need, one will purchase the product for his greed.

These MNCs further led to decline in power of third world countries and also diminishing power of governments. These MNCs now form the so called "deep state" and influence major policy decisions. Consumerism brought with itself many evils like decline of institution of welfare state, joint families. It led to increase in inequality, skewed development, and serious environmental concerns like climate change. The original culture got diminished and the dominant culture of consumerism prevailed. Consumerism has affected all aspects of a society. Wars have been fought for markets and resources. Countries which refused to fall in line faced economic sanctions and had to face issues of food shortages.

It is often said that consumerism gave people no choice. It was not a voluntary adoption but a forced ideology.

In third world countries like India society was based on ancient norms, Buddhist and Hindu Philosophy of self restraint gave priority to spiritual well being over material well-being. When country failed to adopt the mass production methods shortage of food was seen and hence modern science and technology was promoted. The need for oil and demand of products forced us to open our market. Globalization become inevitable and

so is the transformation of society.

Society became materialistic and profit making became the main goal. The institution of family and marriage also got influenced. We got to see the rise of nuclear families where not more than two generation lives together. Earlier concept of joint families became less popular among masses as focus shifted on jobs from agriculture. Large scale migration was seen to urban areas leading to urbanization. The immediate fallout was the older people living alone in villages. Hence, change in need brought a change in society which further changed the culture.

Individual became more materialistic, profit seeking and selfish. In quest for greed, he started ignoring relations. He become self-centered and it further lead to deterioration in the institution of marriage leading to increased divorces, concept of live-in relations etc.

Individual is competing for status and he is overburdened with greed, leading to increased cases of suicides, depression and other mental issues.

The effects of consumerism are evident in the choices we make in our attire, our food, language, religion. Earlier, the Indian attire of Kurta, Pajama, Dhoti, was common but now majority prefers Jeans. In our food habits, junk foods and packaged food is dominating. McDonaldization is evident where food giants offer same food with same taste at different stores throughout the country. Languages also become a hybrid mixed with English. In India, we popularly refer it to "Hinglish". It was the need to adapt English language in order to communicate with others in a Big Market i.e. World. Music and Movies also got influenced, Hollywood Movies are being watched throughout the world and are even more popular than domestic movies. Walmartization is another process which is taking place, which involves a supermarket culture where multiple products are sold in a single shop under a single roof. One is always tempted to purchase irrespective of his need.

The products from other counters began flooding the domestic markets. These often degraded the health however, medicines too were provided through this open market. Hence, individual became a part of the chain of demand and supply. These health concerns also leads to rise in non communicable diseases like diabetes, cancers etc. The changing food habits also required change in cropping patterns. New technologies are being introduced for mass production like use of high yielding variety of seeds, GM Crops, Mechanical Irrigation etc.

To gain maximum profit, each country joined the bandwagon of mass production. Countries like China, Saudi Arabia are facing mass production in sectors like Oil, Steel, and Cement and are exporting products to other countries at cheaper rates leading to gradual decline in domestic production. Dumping of goods is a rising challenge and even world trade organization is not accommodating for third world countries.

The worst affect of consumerism is seen on Environment. Mass production of crops, irregular and indiscriminate usage of groundwater, pollution by industries, change in cropping patterns, rise of barren lands, deforestation, decrease in biodiversity all leads

to degradation of environment and leads towards problems like global warming, ozone depletion, environmental hazards etc. Exploitation became the new norm and rich countries became richer by exploiting resources from poor countries.

Consumerism, though, have resulted into certain positives like uniting the world by improving communication, improving the life of millions, providing geographically irregular terrains with food security. Yet, it cannot be continued to go on forever. Sustainable development keeping in mind the requirement of future generation, and using as per our need is the way ahead.

Time has come to go back to the philosophy which Gautama Buddha preached of self sufficiency, finding joy and peace through societal gains not through material gains. The preservation of culture is also essential as it is our heritage. A world which is based on unity of diversity is always better than one based on unity of uniformity. It is up to us now to realize the need and differentiate it from greed. It would however be like lighting a matchstick in a hurricane and trying to sustain the flame. Yet, it is only humans that can sustain the flame and give everyone a better Earth to live.

Fighting Corruption is Not Just Good Governance But Also Self-Defence and Patriotism

Himanshu Kaushik, IAS (CSE 2017)

Corruption has been prevalent in Indian Society since ancient times. Chanakya, the great ancient scholar wrote extensively on the issue of corruption. He recognized corruption as the root cause of downfall of any empire. He emphasized on a rule based society where corrupt should be effectively punished and should not be let off at any cost. However, Indian society did not see much reform. Father of nation M.K. Gandhi promoted simple living based on needs and not acting on greed. Even Rajiv Gandhi famously held that only a small portion of government provided benefit reaches common man, rest is collected by corrupts.

In recent Transparency International Report, India was among the worst countries in terms of corruption.

As evident, corruption is still a major cause of concern in Indian society. It affects us at all levels be it individual or societal. The image of India in global politics is not good in terms of transparency. Developmental Deficit which is a feature of Indian society is partially due to corruption.

These are also a trust deficit in common people that state has not done enough for their welfare. The "Sab Chalta Hai" approach reflects the cultural aspect of corruption where it is a new normal for a person to do corrupt practices, or to face corruption. There is ignorance towards corruption which needs to ends as corruption affects everyone in the society. Fighting against corruption is actually a self-defence as it is equivalent to fighting for our rights. However, in order to root out corruption, its manifestations at different levels need to be tackled.

Corruption at individual level occurs when an individual takes decisions for his own gains overlooking the interest of others and society. It devoids the individual of compassion, empathy and sense of responsibility towards society. Corruption is like a black hole which has no end. It will keep on increasing the greed. Individual who is exercising power must have a strong moral fiber to avoid the gains from corruption. It is said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Hence, it is important for individuals to stay focused on their goal of working for welfare rather than personal gains.

It is also the responsibility of citizens to not offer bribe in lieu of services, to not go for shortcuts but follow official procedure. It is also the duty of citizens to vote for honest leaders and vote out corrupt candidates from politics. As Gandhiji said, Be the change you want to see in the world. Hence transformation starts from self. An honest citizen when achieves a position of power should work for the welfare, should not follow others in pursuit of personal gains. It is required to tackle corruption at individual level first. Change can only take place from base.

Corruption in the society is evident from the fact that it is abnormal for a government department to work without corruption. It has become a cultural phenomenon where general ignorance towards corruption has made it a new normal. Bribes are common and people think it is a part of the system. The morality of individuals promoting corruption has significantly affected the ethics of our society.

Corruption is leading to exploitation of the weaker sections of the society. They are not represented in proportion to population. They are still being exploited and due to corruption, they are denied their basic rights. Corruption is an evil in a just society and perpetuates other forms of evil like violence, intolerance in the society.

Corruption in spheres like sports, religion has led to various issues like lack of opportunities for sports, use of drugs and performance enhancers, commercialization of religion where institutions demand money by hitting at religious beliefs. Corruption has led to environmental issues as projects are being cleared by government departments which will greatly affect and degrade the environment without proper Environmental Impact Assessment. The infamous Coal Allocation Scan overlooked environmental concerns in many coal blocks.

Corruption has badly affected India's image in global politics. India is seen as a country with an inefficient corrupt system of bureaucracy. Lee Kuan Yew, father of Singapore analyzed what India lacked which stopped it from becoming a superpower. He could only find out the reason to be corruption. China implemented its policies with transparency and control and hence succeeded. Hence, he held that unless India reforms its society, system and get rid of corruption, it will be impossible for her to be a superpower.

The multiparty democracy where there is a greater role of regional parties has also led to policy paralysis and corruption. Economic Inequality, Developmental Deficit, Slow Service Delivery, Judicial Pendency can all be improved if corruption is tackled. Fighting corruption is perceived as self defence as corruption affects everyone. It is not a process limited to an individual. As evident, it spreads in a society and perpetrates other forms of evil. Corruption is an antithesis to democracy and hence, it preaches inequalities, injustice and selfishness. If one does not speak up against injustice done to poor, he is bound to suffer injustice at later stage.

Patriotism is not only about rising for National Anthem and respecting National Symbols. It is about fighting against the evils prevalent in society and it is necessary to

fight corruption. Corruption is actually defeating the idea of selfless service. It is defeating the idea of India given by our freedom fighters.

Government in order to empower citizens and deal with the issue of corruption has enacted laws like Prevention of Corruption Act provided Citizen Charter and actively pushing for Digital delivery of services through Digitization. These methods are necessary and use of Information and Communication Technology is bound to reduce corruption. However, these efforts are not enough as much needs to be done to bring societal changes. Laws are useless unless implemented well and supported by society.

Activism is needed to fight ignorance towards corruption. Recently, there has been a ray of hope as seen in various Anti corruption moments like Anna Hazare's India Against corruption. It linked the idea of fighting corruption with patriotism and hence got massive support. Government brought the much needed Lokpal Bill in response but is still in Lok Sabha due to delayed implementation. These social movements are necessary in order achieve a fair, efficient and just society. Transparency will fetch India greater goods and has the potential to bring millions of poor out of poverty.

India is at crossroads where it can be a superpower or it can remain a third world country. The choice is ours to decide. It is wise to recall Plato who held that Sparta lost to Athens because of corruption. He gave us the importance of real knowledge which enables us to differentiate between greed and necessities. The time is right to recollect the values and work for a fair, just and transparent Nation.

Yesterday's Score Does Not Win You Game Today

Himanshu Kaushik, IAS (CSE 2017)

The only thing that is constant in this world is change. Nothing is permanent. It is a new day everyday and each day requires a new approach. Everything is relevant to its time. Yesterday's score does not win you game today as what was relevant yesterday may not be relevant today. Hence, it is about doing what is required today. The only thing worth remembering about past is the experience that teaches us to improve and improvise. Self-realization of mistakes is essential to improve. There is no need to stay in the past as it only draws one back. It is good to let go off the past and embrace the present.

History teaches us that overconfidence and living in past glory has led to downfall of many empires and individuals. It brings a sense of comfort and ignorance and ultimately downfall. It is not good to be a prisoner of history. Japan during Second World War faced crushing defeat as it lived in the past glory of defeating Russian empire. Even India was invaded several times by foreign invaders as India chose ignorance over action. It is also not good to over glorify past and avoid modernization. Reforms are needed to stay relevant at both individual and societal level.

At Individual Level, one needs to be rational in his approach. One should not be drawn to the past as it leads to stagnation of growth in personal skills. The past should remind us about our mistakes and it is present which gives us a chance to improve. Achievements in the past do provide a sense of pride but they also preach over confidence and complacency. It is up to the individual to deal with it. He can choose to be complacent or chose to introspect to improve.

If one is preparing for exams the studies before the exam will help, not after that. Hence, respecting the time is important. Time is crucial and does not stop for anyone. A parent avoiding his child and not caring enough is bound to suffer in future when he would not be having opportunity to improve the moral fiber of his child later on. Similarly, it is seen that children do not care enough for their parents in old age and then regrets it when they themselves become old. Similarly, having a past which promoted exploitation and glorifying it is not good. An old mindset never leads to progressive life. People with prejudices in mind face prejudice themselves at a later stage. Hence, it is true what goes around, comes around.

In sports, each day is a new day. Recently, world's fastest man Usain Bolt lost in his favourite event of 100 m sprint despite of being the world champion since past 8 years. This shows no one can take his position for granted. One needs to perform each day to win.

Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee called General Elections early in 2004 and suffered an unexpected defeat that too when his previous government gained majority comfortably. Hence, it is necessary to acknowledge the present challenges and fight them and one should have the capability to recognize his limits. Our actions should be limited by the time. Present time may require new approach and should be adopted.

Similarly, at Societal Level a progressive society is one that is reformative and welcoming to modern beliefs and changes. In societies where old beliefs are still prevalent and not in line with modern ideas tend to be exploitative to certain sections. Sati System which was considered a custom in Indian Society was stopped when society acknowledged it to be exploitative. Yet, there are other social evils like casteism, female infanticide, patriarchy which are still prevalent and can only be removed if society accepts modern ideas and is keen on reforms.

Modern times require modern approaches and glorification of past needs to be stopped. Glorification of culture often leads to promotion of exploitative exercises which further subjugates weaker sections and makes them vulnerable towards crime.

Patriarchy which has led to subjugation of women both in family and society needs to be tackled by adopting modern ideas of gender equality and gender empowerment. Issues like feminization of poverty, feminization of labour can be tackled if women are made equal participants in policy framing and decision making. For all this, reforms should be welcomed, and exploitative practices need to be discouraged.

Our Education System needs complete overhaul as it is promoting rote learning and not promoting scientific temper. This could be seen in less innovation and production capacity in Indian Manufacturing Industries.

India, in order to gain its rightful place in world, needs to rise above the glories of past in which it was a golden sparrow and needs to introspect what needs to be done about the pertinent issues like poverty, malnutrition, unemployment and casteism. Over dependence on cultural pride and nationalism can further lead to neglect of structural changes required in the administration of country.

The modern ideas of Human Rights, Secularism, Gender Rights, Tribal Rights, Equality etc. needs to be adopted fully by the society and country by way of reforms.

Reluctance towards modern technology needs to be avoided. Hence, it is good to embrace modernity and leave contradictions of history behind.

In An Age of Digitalisation, Data is the New Oil

Nikhil Rakhecha, IAS (AIR 197 CSE 2018)

Third industrial revolution guided by computer technology ushered in new age i.e. digital age. Nearly 2 billion people around the world are actively using internet. In India itself there are 700 million mobile phone users. Having online presence has become prerequisite for successful business. Governments all over the world are striving to harness e-governance models. We are all surrounded by smart phones to smart homes. In this rapidly digitising world, basic fuel running these plethora of application is DATA.

Recently world's biggest social media corporation Facebook was scrutinized by US Congress over misuse of this data. This incidence brought forward the extreme potential data could have. Thus many equate data to oil.

Oil has been instrumental in driving our economics. From transport to industry oil has been fuel running it. Similarly data has become basic ingredient. Data about costumer, their choices-preference, purchasing habits have become essential for business to chart out their marketing strategy. Advertisement which pops up on our screen precisely what we were searching for, are noting but customized using data.

Not just for business but for governments too data is new oil. In age of evidence based policy making, governments are collecting data for tailoring its plans to ensure efficiency.

Education sector could be taken as an example. UNICEF in partnership with HRD ministry created gender gap map. It represented girl students having poor levels of learning outcomes in select pockets of country. Now using this data specialized intervention is being done through remedial classes to bridge the gap.

Similarly recently formulated aspirational district program of NITI Aayog was formulated using data on various development parameters shown as literacy, income level, health standards etc. Without data government historically been intervening through one size fits all approach.

Data facilitate much needed customization in highly individualizing world. It allows for precision in intervention and thus improves its efficiency. Data allows to understand need and demand of products/services. Thus, it helps to undertake targeted intervention.

It also assist in monitoring the progress of such interventions. We have numerous ranking such as human development index, human index etc. formulated using data.

Analogy of data with oil thus holds time for its worth and utility in almost all spheres of life. Like oil it is also most essential for the economy.

We have million dollar companies offering their services for free (Facebook, twitter, google). However, they are harnessing rich data from our activities online. Thus, emerging as data aggregating platforms.

Just like gulf countries have monopoly in oil production, these social media giants have acquired similar distinction. They collect millions of bytes of data every day and sale it to third party or use to improve its own service.

As oil has to be mined and refined before its use, raw data too cannot be utilized. Thus, we need big data analytical tools which could make sense out turns voluminous data being generated every day. Raw data is transformed into patterns and fed into system for business process re-engineering.

So just like oil data has become expensive. Though it is available with many activities, not everyone is equipped to process it. So the expensive technology and well trained human resource to process data makes it expensive.

To contrast oil, developing countries are net exporter of data (raw). Companies in developed world use this raw material to capture markets of third world. Not just business, but foreign policies of these countries are data driven.

This brings our attention to few other shortcomings associated with new oil just like conventional. Scarcity of oil creates inflationary pressure on economics. Similarly this monopoly and inequitable access to meaningful data makes it scarce resources.

Oil extraction has environmental fallouts. Similarly data mining has negative repercussion at personal level. Privacy, an integral part of right to life with dignity is compromised in this digitalizing world. Recent incident of Cambridge Analytical is evidence of this threat.

However, data goes beyond the potential of oil. Latter, once used gets exhausted however data is used, reused, returned and restructured. There's no limit on use of data. Same data could be used by different agencies by extracting what is relevant to their domain of operation.

Countries like India have to realize the potential of this new resource. We were deprived of natural resource like oil. Thus, our economy depended on input of such resources.

However, huge young population programs like 'Digital India', 'Smart Cities' rising penetration of mobile technology to remotest corners will generate massive data. Budget

2019 also announced mission on internet of things (cyber physical system). All these connected devices would communicate billions of bits continuously.

This data advantage could help us even replace old oil. Mapping of renewable energy potential throughout the country, smart grids to enhance efficiency of power use, data driven mobility to reduce fuel consumption, smart energy efficient housing etc. could reduce demand of old oil.

To achieve success in harnessing this new resource transformation alteration have to be carried out. First step would be to generate and capture data. Digitize services wherever possible (land digitization, direct benefit transfer), extensive use of Aadhar to map data usage.

Next step would be to standardized data collection, aggregation and sharing methods. Plethora of data is already available, but in discrete format. Thus, cannot be put to analysis. Develop common data standard throughout the country and facilitate data sharing.

Availability of standard data would then be processed using sophisticated big data analytics tool. As recently CAG and economic survey has shown how data could be used in policy making, government should utilize the processed data to tailor its interventions to suit local needs and plug leakages.

Throughout this process there is a need to have strong data protection regime. Recently B.M. Srikrishna Committee has suggested Data Protection Bill. This could be enacted to prevent misuse of data and create institutionalized mechanism to address grievances upon breach of data privacy.

Soon the world would move towards fourth industrial revolution guided by robotics and artificial intelligence. Facilitators of earlier revolutions were steam engine, electricity and internet respectively. Now this upcoming revolutions would be fuelled by new oil i.e. data. Artificial intelligence would be acquired through learning and processing of data.

Potential of automation in fields of agriculture, manufacturing and service would also be facilitated by data. In India, the IT back offices of world is already at advantageous position to reap benefits of this new oil. Appropriate intervention has to be done to sustain and harness this new oil.

India is Yet to Celebrate its Diversities

Abhisek Oswal, IRS [(IT) AIR 154 CSE 2019]

It was a bright morning of 15th August. The national flag was flying high, the atmosphere was filled with patriotic vibes, 'Mille Sur Mera Tumhara' playing in the background. Our team was particularly excited as we were taking part in annual debate.

The topic for the debate was 'India is yet to celebrate its diversities'. Debates are sign of a healthy democracy. They let us analyse, give various opinions and views and broaden our perspective. Rules were simple, two teams – Team Patriot and Team Progressive will get 15 minutes each to keep their views and results will be announced at the end of the debate.

Team progressive – Our diversities are half celebrated.

Historically we have been a plural society. But the plurality came with biasness. The society from Vedic ages have been patriarchal and conservative. Women played subservient role in shaping the society. Our sacred texts commented women as 'selfish and wicked'.

The plague of caste system was legacy of our history. Chandelas were socially ostracised. Slavery and force labour exploited and marginalised the weaker section. The description of caste hierarchy with shudra belonging to 'feets' is self-deplorable. How can we celebrate our historical legacy with such injustice?

Geographically we occupy 2.4% of global land, possess 7,500 kilometres of coastline. But don't you think the focus on development have been geographically skewed? On one hand we have strengthen our western arm industrially, economically. But on the other hand, the eastern part of the country is neglected. The skewed focus undermine our geographical diversity.

Politically, we say we are the world's largest democracy. But the largest democracy of the world is plagued by communal and caste based politics. The state of governance is infected by corruption. The government of the people, by the people is not been able to fulfil the promise.

Money power in elections questioned the efficiency of results of 'free and fair' process. Women representation have been dismal. We celebrate our regional representation in upper and lower house. But have the representation been equitable? Favouritism and ideological dominance have eroded our political diversity.

Demographically, nearly half of our population consist of women. But they constitute only 26% of labour force. Our laws have been archaic and gender biased. In spite of democratic and cultural progress women are subjected to sexual violence, female foeticide. The dichotomy of our society is we worship them as 'Shakti' and even burn them for dowry.

We probed in our syncretic culture. But every other day we hear of fight between communities in name of religion and caste. Couples are burnt alive for dishonouring their caste values. Justice nowadays are met on road, rather than in courts. With all such events how can we celebrate our cultural diversity?

Economically, agriculture has been our backbone. But backbone is now being weakened. The neglect of the agriculture sector has led for farmer suicides, faced migration. Gandhi said 'India lives in its villages'. But today the same villages are being left behind in development process.

This has only deplored the rural dwellers to forcefully migrate for better living and basic amenities. Oxfam reports says 1% of top Indians owned 73% of resources with crony capitalism how can we celebrate our economical diversity?

Environment has been part and parcel of our life. Rishis used to stay in forest. A sustainable Indian life was connected to preservation of nature. But today we have crossed all our limits and bounds in exploiting nature and its resources.

Our rivers are getting polluted with every passing day. Forest have been cut indiscriminately and forest dwellers have been evicted forcefully. The neglect of our nature, environment and ecology have broken the syncretic connect with it and question today our environmental diversity?

At global front we have an image of a responsible power, a tolerant and vibrant nation. But also some of our acts have been criticized in terms of intervention in other nation's affair. Our historical hospitality and humanitarian approach to refugees have been questioned today by our discriminatory treatment towards 'Rohingyas' or fellow 'African student'.

Tolerance was the core pillar on which our plural society was built. But pluralistic diversity is being questioned today. Growing communal disharmony, dictation on what to eat, what to wear and what to watch have threatened our creative and intuitive rights

of expression. Linguistic and dominant cultural enforcement have questioned our secular diversity.

The audience were awe-struck with the views put forward by Team Progressive and Team Patriots took stage to defend India's diversity.

Team Patriot – Indian diversity is being celebrated from ages.

Historically, though caste and untouchability was an unintended outcome but we should never forget that our cultural legacy with syncretic tolerant society was also an offshoot of our past. India has been the land of sufis and saints. A land where world's largest two major religion- Buddhism and Jainism were born and Islam thrived and flourished.

We are also land of the mother Sita and also Rani Laxmi Bai. Women have played equally important role to shape our history. Purans may be criticized for being biased, but they show the way for living a fulfilled life.

Our is a land of Nizamuddin Auliya and Guru Nanak both being served and worshipped cutting across religion domains. Our festivals are themselves epitome of our diversity in celebration.

Geographically, we are divided by mountains, rivers, valleys and hills. But each state region have its own uniqueness in terms of food habits, cultural practices, economical life and most importantly we are able to co-operate and co-exist with such diversity since ages.

Politically, our constitution by itself is exemplification of diverse, plural and secular value. When matured democracies of West hesitated to give universal adult franchise, we set an example by doing so right since our independence.

Our free and fair electoral process have been a Steller example for democracies world over. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments exemplify our commitment to empower women. Our constitutional institutions always stand for the rights of weaker sections. Free speech, constructive criticism and dissent have been a marked celebration of our political diversity.

'I shall not agree with your view, but

I shall defend your right to say so'

Socially, we are a syncretic, vibrant nation which enmasses 7 different major religions, 3 major races, thousands of different languages and dialects. We are the land where Kabir preached gospel of religious harmony, where Gandhi stood against all odds for Harijans and government is standing up for Divyanjans.

Our policy of reservation have politically and economically weaker section women are provided level playing field in all spheres to realise their true potential social justice for an

inclusive and participative society have been our goal. Tribals are ensured their culture is protected, backwards are empowered for social advancement. The co-existence and collaboration in all sphere of development from gender justice to human rights showcases our social diversity.

Environmentally, we Indian have always been close to nature and celebrated its beauty and diversity. From Chipko Movement to Narmada Bachao our love for our ecology is time tested. Nature has been part and parcel of our daily life and its conservation is our duty. Namami gange was not just a mission to clean the river put an emotional appeal. Sikkim has a practice of having fraternal ties with trees. Isn't it showcase our celebration of environmental diversity?

'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is our motto is international sphere. We have always supported and even been forefront in humanitarian assistant. Our Panchsheel is followed across the world for global rule based order. Our soft power ensures economical human and cultural development across borders. We supported Tibetans from Chinese prosecution, help to liberate Bangladesh yet ensured and strives for global peace.

Economically, we have undone historical biasedness. Women labour face participation is bound to increase with breaking of glass ceiling, education and skills. 'Jai Jawan and Jai Kisan' shows our commitment towards agriculture and farmer right from times of independence to green revolution and till today with aim to double farmers income.

Tolerance, as said was and is a core pillar of our plural democracy. Our country is a land where 130 crore people exists cutting across regions, religions and linguistic backgrounds. But with a common identity of being Indian which is above all ideological and political identities. The idea of India is not defined by sporadic communal tensions, but on solidarity to stand with each other amidst differences. Tolerance, secular, and progressive values are indeed celebrations of our diversities.

With this both teams had finished presenting their views and it was the time for results. Audience were amazed with views from both sides, appreciating every single opinion. The judges came out with analysis and results.

Both the team have presented and substantial their view on one hand. Team Patriot who showcases our historical legacy and tolerant society, and on other side Team Progressive highlighted the current situation which plague our society.

True that these are issues with the current societal norms, growing intolerance gender biasness and marginalisation of weaker section. But also our unity amidst so much diversities, upholding the principle of democracy for more than 7 decades, have strengthened our secular fabric.

On one side we have a world where there is bloodshed within religion, politically sponsored ideological dominance, growing protectionism and inequality. On the other

we have our own country where 130 crore citizens stands together for each other's rights, social justice and freedom to express. In the long journey towards mature society from a nation-state towards nation we have and are bound to face hiccups of communalism, biasness. But our resilience have only strengthen the plural fabric and enabled us to celebrate our diversity through dissent, debate and discussion.

What new India needs today are the patriots with progressive thoughts and actions. The winner in the whole debate is Indian values, Indian tolerance and democracy and overall Team India.

India's Focus Shift from SAARC to BIMSTEC is Strategic but Underused

Abhisek Oswal, IRS [(IT) AIR 154 CSE 2019]

In 300 BCE the Indian philosopher Chanakya in his world renowned theories on state politics – “The Arthashastra” talked about the principle of ‘Beri - Sandhi’. In 15th century AD Machiavelli elaborated it as enemy’s enemy is my friend.

This diplomatic philosophy was applicable since the era of colonisation to cold war. Thus India’s strategic shift from SAARC to BIMSTEC is based on the greater ‘Rajamandala’ predicted by Chanakya for his own geostrategic and economic interest.

Recent invitation to BIMSTEC leaders for the oath-taking ceremony of the new Government and (previous invitees where SAARC leaders) itself validates the strategic importance of the grouping. But why this shift from SAARC to the Eastern and for Eastern neighbours? Is this the signal that SAARC is no more relevant? Is this a strategic ploy to isolate Pakistan in South Asian region and internationally at large? Or there are other strategic weightage?

SAARC was formed to integrate politically, economically and culturally the disintegrated region in the world. The region with quarter of the world’s population hosting some of the world’s fastest growing economies aimed to share mutual benefits of development didn’t move as per expectations.

The obstructionist nature of the neighbour Pakistan is to blame for SAARC’s state. The multilateral regional forum was stalled because of the bilateral rivalries. The disinterest between the neighbours was clearly seen when Pakistan was suspicious about India’s gift of South Asia Satellite to SAARC members.

Neither the previous treaties like SAFTA have reaped intended benefits, nor are the issues on counter terrorism, trans-regional motor vehicle agreement moving ahead. Apart from Pakistan, rest of the members have time and again criticized India for its ‘Big Brother’ attitude.

The gains achieved by SAARC are minimal. But BIMSTEC, on the other hand, gives India an opportunity to pick the low hanging fruit of economic political and cultural integration.

The strategic shift goes well with India's Act East Policy. The geographic mix of the BIMSTEC with SAARC minus Pakistan plus Thailand and Myanmar who are also the members of Asia gives India opportunity to pursue beyond neighbourhood policy.

Historically, this region had close economic and cultural links with India. Chola's trade boost to south East Asia is well known. Bangladesh hails India for its support in the 1971 liberation war. Nepal and India since time immemorial enjoy 'roti-beti ka rishta'.

Geographically, the region is the bridge between India and South East Asia. India since two decades has been trying to strengthen economic relations with the Asian tigers, boost trade and BIMSTEC is sure to play a complementary role in this. Moreover the region forms a part of the larger Indian Ocean region which India is trying to capitalise upon. Thus, the focus shift to BIMSTEC is imperative in Indian diplomacy.

Politically, the BIMSTEC grouping is a stable one. The countries enjoy good support of the Indian government. 'Hilsa diplomacy', 'Buddhism diplomacy' have added new vigour to regional integration process.

The Indian cultural and soft power is more than visible in BIMSTEC. Once the Thailand's ambassador said- 'It is difficult to point out where India starts and Thailand ends'. He said this after watching a drama based on the epic Mahabharata. Yoga, Buddhism, Bengali culture gives India commendable hold in this regional forum culturally.

Economically the region is progressing faster than SAAARC. The trade between the regions have increased ten folds in just one decade. Also, the region also faces similar economic challenges of poverty, malnutrition, climate change and natural disaster. This gives the forum an immense scope to formulate, co-operate and coordinate on the common issues and achieve sustainable development goals.

But above all the top priority while increasing integration in BIMSTEC, is the development of north-eastern region of the country. The region is the link between mainland India and BIMSTEC countries. But it also the most under developed, least integrated and ethnically most sensitive region of country.

The BIMSTEC grouping could turn-around the fortunes of the north-east by thrust on transportation for transformation of north-east. The security scenario can be enhanced with co-operation and joint operations. This was evident when Indian army along Myanmar performed surgical strike on (NSCN-CK) leaders. Thus north-east is to immensely gain from this strategic shift.

In spite of all feel good factors the advantages of BIMSTEC are strategically underused. For instance, though there is immense political will to give thrust, there is regional asymmetry with India being the largest and fastest growing economy.

Most of the promises, commitments have remained only on papers or are work in progress for instance, the Kaladan multimodal project have been looming in delays for the last 12 years. The ambitious Asian highway have been confined to papers.

The region also faces bilateral hurdles for examples Bhutan's no to BBIN transport project, the Teesta water sharing argument between India and Bangladesh and the recently cropping up issue of Rohingyas refugees from Myanmar. The political stability also depends on the present regime. For illustration India- Bangladesh enjoy cordial relation when Awami league is in power.

The grouping also doesn't hesitate to use China card to caution India. This is frequently done by Nepal to warn India. Also, the region barring India is crashing under China's cheque book diplomacy. The recently released report by Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows drastic reduction in fund allocation to BIMSTEC countries. A new threat of Islamic radicalisation has also engulfed the BIMSTEC forum.

The diplomatic and bureaucratic hurdles with complexity of regional polity stalls the regional progress. Another angle which inhibits and undermines the region's growth is negative para-diplomacy. The state of west Bengal has not been co-operative on Teesta water sharing issue. Tamil Nadu still criticises Srilanka for war crimes on tamilians during the liberation war with LTTE.

BIMSTEC is more than often seen as a substitute to SAARC. But the truth is neither one can be a substitute to another. It is rightly said 'you can change your friends, but you cannot change your neighbours'. The strategic shift to BIMSTEC can gain new momentum with political will, faster implementation of projects, regular meets and briefing and by confidence building mechanisms.

But at the same time, SAARC has its own utility and cannot be left alone. It holds its own significance in turn of geostrategic and security complexities. BIMSTEC compliments SAARC at best and can become a new forum to bestow peace, economic prosperity and regional stability. The priority should be on culture-commerce and connectivity with an all-new vigour and keeping in mind the Gujral doctrine of non- reciprocity while implementing the new 'Rajamandala' with BIMSTEC.

New India in the Pursuit of Excellence

Mudit Jain, IRS (AIR 173 CSE 2017)

It has been 70 years since India became an Independent democratic country. Long ordeal with colonial rule left a poverty ridden, precocious India marred by challenges like feudal agrarian nature, casteism, communalism etc.

The India of old carries a monkey on its back in the form of baggage like socio-economic-political-environmental and so on challenges. To turn the tide in its favour, new India was marked by paradigm shifts in various spheres is moving towards India of dreams and pursuit of excellence is important part of the process.

Excellence as per Dr. Kalam can lead to an India ahead of all other nations. What is needed is that all individuals preach and practice excellence. Let us see with various dimensions where in New India in pursuit of excellence is moving to rectify its old baggage, starting with sociological.

Pursuit of excellence in sociological paradigms is seen in measures for emancipation of women where in women themselves are torch bearers of empowerment, gender equality, reducing crimes against women etc.

The youth today is excelling in fields of sports, business, and societal transformation, becoming champions of change like casteism, communalism, corruption etc. This is reflected in improving rankings of India in corruption perception Index.

All this has led to focus on reducing inequalities (SDG-8) and excellence in economic sphere.

Excellence in economy will improve trickle down if it is inclusive and concerns with even the last man standing in the last row.

Reduction in hunger, poverty, economic inequalities etc. require excellence in fields like skill India, digital India and make in India so that inclusive and productive jobs are created for one and all. Ease of doing business is another fact of India's pursuit of excellence.

The sphere of economic excellence has taken upon itself to transform, clean and energize India by economic reforms like GST, demonetization, solving NPA crisis etc. which will increase India's potential to harness demographic dividend.

This takes us to another sphere, the political aspect of new India and its pursuit of excellence.

Reduction or weeding out corruption, finding solution for criminalization of politics, electoral reforms, improving parliament's functioning, eradicating the bug of terror and bad bureaucracy are age old issues.

Pursuit of excellence in political sphere is manifesting in competitive federalism, cooperative federalism, minimum government and maximum governance, centrality of citizens in governance by e-governance, participatory governance etc. so that solutions to age old issues are found out sooner. This will create an ethical framework embedded in fabrics of transparency, rule of law and integrity to improve overall environment of new India.

Let us now analyze new India and its pursuit of excellence with respect to environment.

Climate Change, global warming, disturbances in life on land and life in water have affected mankind in general and marginalized in particular.

New India's efforts to excel in environmental sustainability are seen in recognition of principle of stewardship and trusteeship by New India in form of INDCs, Paris deal, and pledge to build sustainable cities and responsible consumption and production (SDG).

This is reflected in Swachh Bharat Campaign which recently celebrated ODF week and "Swachta He Seva" campaign including Indian cricket team in the pursuit to excel by reaching out to youth. This reflects in improvement of sanitation to 62% of India from 38% in 2014.

New India's pursuit for excellence will remain incomplete if it does not address the psychological growth of its drivers.

The global happiness Index ranked India at 122nd rank. This marks the proof of increasing depressing and suicides in society.

New India's pursuit to excellence here is seen in national health policy and mental health policy which focus on wellness, rehabilitation within families and societies along with decriminalization of suicide.

This is also reflected in utilitarian approach of inclusive growth taking divyangjan together, transgender and other vulnerable sections of society so that India excels as a whole and not just a part.

Other areas where India's excellence drive is evident are fields of education, innovation, industrialization, infrastructure creation etc. so that India sheds its precious society tag as discussed by economic survey.

This excellence pursuit reflects in India's global partnership for enhancing development, peace and justice in other countries as well.

Example of this can be seen with respect to new India's positive role in Afghanistan and Africa on one hand and free-open-peaceful-Indian-Pacific ocean on other.

New India's changed paradigms haven't been able to counter poverty or casteism. It has so far not found out sustainable solution to issue of declining jobs and increasing inequalities in society. This has also been a laggard as far as countering corruption and terror is concerned. Environmental challenges are no different.

But this is not because failure of idea of new India's pursuit of excellence but because these are deep rooted problems. New India's drive towards maturity by solving these core issues is possible only by pursuit of excellence as it will make solution sustainable and long term.

"Sankalp Se Siddhi" or New India is not just a pledge or a paradigm shift. It is an idea or vision toward building an India of tomorrow. It is a revolution to make this century not only Asian century but also India's century.

Excellence forms core part of new India. Again, as Dr. Kalam said, a nation can excel only if its citizens excel individually and in society. New India's pursuit to excellence is a novel idea that needs to be nourished, nurtured and taken care of by one and all. Excellence is like a tiger that new India is destined to ride. Disembarking is not a possibility and staying on it is worth the challenges.

Women Empowerment: The Need of the Hour is to Move Beyond Emotive Posturing

Mudit Jain, IRS (AIR 173 CSE 2017)

Character of a society is a function of many inter-twiddled aspects. Women represent one such keystone in the arch of societal architecture and hence have importance no less than other genders. But largely they have been reduced to a 'vulnerable' section. It is not that nothing has been done for women empowerment, but what matters is the way it is done.

Historical injustices against women have their roots in a patriarchal society. Pre-independence era saw many social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar etc. all grappled with social evils like sati, widow's stigmatization, girl child issues etc. The reforms were driven on sense of true justice but by a small section of Indian society.

Post independence the basis of women empowerment was derived largely from glorification of the past in name of social reformers, with women examples being very few. This failed to provide women with real participation in their own empowerment and strengthened the emotive posturing of the gender. By giving women "status of goddess", a false sense of empowerment got deeply embedded in society.

This gave vent to hypocrisy which is reflected till date in form of failed measures and policies. The reforms remained superficial and unsustainable because they failed to embed feeling of justice, respect and honour for women.

Let us analyze how the measures taken till date faltered at various ends including socio-economic-political and psychological.

The emotive posturing of women hardly helped their social status and their issues. Indian women have one of the poorest health indicators in the world with 56% being anaemic, having one of the lowest longevity in not only Asia but lower than few African nations too.

Sex ratio is paltry low at 940 while child sex ratio has decreased from 976 in 1951 to 914 in 2011 census. All those numbers have their roots in early marriages of women, average age being 21.8 years only. This causes denial of reproductive rights, domestic abuse, and higher level of maternal mortality rate (212) and consequential poor infant mortality rates (44) as per census 2011.

Focusing on just interplay of words gives false sense of participation leading to poor inclusivity, gender inequality (India placed at 135th position in IHDI). Society has failed to not to commodify women which has affected them psychologically so much that it has given way to internalization of crime. This is manifested in poor implementation of various Anti-Rape, Anti-Abuse, Criminal Law Amendment Acts etc.

Emotive posturing of women has led to myth that goes against their ability to be part of economic growth of nation and hence caused genderization of labour. Hence schemes remain aloof from ground realities and perpetuate poor participation in decision making, low to no economic rights. This leads to perpetual ineffectiveness in countering lack of women empowerment, domestic abuse, male chauvinism and other ill practices.

Political participation perhaps represents meagre emotive posturing of women in the best possible manner. The long awaited "grant" of 33% representation in Parliament has remained on papers with representation for women languishing around 11%. It is true that right to vote was given to Indian women far more 'generously' than even western nations, but it remains to be seen how many women we vote to parliament.

This has led to poor orientation to women's issues, grievance redressal and even day-to-day sufferings.

All these limitations have hurt women psychologically more than anything else. "Women move shoulder to shoulder with men" is been said for decades. But this is way far from truth. Emotive posturing has not been able to change societal mindset, has not led to societal sensitization and raised questions like redistribution vs. participation, growth vs. sustainable and inclusive development including women, entitlement vs. favour etc.

Hence it is well clear that there is a need to change the way women empowerment is looked into. But does it call for complete overhaul? What should be done to ensure that women empowerment is not just a namesake? Perhaps the answers to these questions lie in addressing basic issues leading to cyclic degeneration of status of women.

Lets us see what steps can be taken for a sustainable women empowerment which is beyond mere promises and addresses ground realities.

Societal sensitization has been long talked about. The recent "He for She" campaign is a bright step forward to change patriarchal nature of society to a just one.

The vicious cycle of women abuse needs to be countered right from homes. Parents need to realize that they have important role in imparting value education particularly to male and instil confidence in girl child. Various governmental education schemes like Sarva Siksha Abhyan, Right To Education etc. need to be focusing at practical implementation of value education via change in curriculum, teacher sensitization etc.

This will embed a girl's right to education in social fabric of country and not look at it as a favour. This will provide real participation of girls in economic and social growth

having positive externalities on nutrition, health, delayed marriages, reproductive rights etc.

An educated girl child would have an empowered adolescence and hence will be aware of her entitlements and rights including socio-economic-political. This will allow women empowerment to be internalized within women making it sustainable and driven by an "invisible hand". This has been shown by a UN report which says that even 7 years education delays marriage age, reduces MMR, IMR, malnourishment in women and children etc.

This applied and pragmatic approach towards phase containment of problems at levels of girl child would provide for female participation in formal work sectors, while currently 90% women workforce is restricted to informal sectors. Hence next step that logically follows is skill development of women, vocational trainings etc. It is not that these are not done now, but need is to streamline the policies on sound basis and truly implement them. For example, recently framed policies like 'Skill India', 'Make In India', 'Digital India', 'Swachh Bharat' etc. should have dedicated departments and focus on women involvement for their real participation and empowerment.

This will have positive effects like make women self dependent, increase their financial autonomy, increase their say in decision making in family and prevent domestic abuse.

If all goes well then this will itself help women empowerment and make it a virtuous cycle leading to empowered old age where by they will be aware of their entitlements, live a dignified life ahead without need to be dependent on their children. Such a path to women empowerment will create positive external linkages in form of more and more women joining hands for self empowerment, with more and more males realizing their role as facilitators towards the cause. But is the demand too much? Do these logically interlinked sceneries really work? Let us find the answers.

Western nations, even the lesser developed Latin American nations and eastern European nations after offer not only hope but many examples.

Feminist movements in USA largely began with demand of voting rights but culminated with participation at all levels. Today they represent themselves as one of the most empowered society with high gross enrollment rations in primary and higher education for both genders. This is hence an example of how investing in girl education really leads to an inclusive society.

Latvia, though not known to be an economic powerhouse, has done well to achieve highest sex ratio in the world at 1187 females per thousand males. This is because of governmental policies and women empowerment and present example to India on how to streamline and implement anti-child sex detection and illegal abortion laws like pre conception and pre natal detection techniques (PCPNDT).

Long denied reproductive rights to women in Ireland were recently changed. This was possible only by moving beyond emotive posturing of women and achieves real empowerment for women.

Other example from across the world are effective rights in Bangladesh by focusing on girl education and economic linkages and general end of hypocrisy bringing parity of thoughts, evolving emotive posturing into real empowerment.

Hence it can be well seen that limiting women empowerment to emotive posturing has not worked well and moving beyond that is way ahead as shown by other nations. It is important that the Indian society realizes that there is a definite fault in its women empowerment programs. Now it depends completely on us that we take logical steps forward or be like an ostrich and dig our heads in sand to be in a false sense of being a part of completely empowered society, which is definitely non-existent in India as of now.

Courage to Accept and Dedication to Improve Are Two Keys to Success

Namrata Jain, IAS (AIR 12 CSE 2018)

In the late 1960s, when Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri was assigned with the Railways' Ministry portfolio where he took the job with zeal and determination. But unfortunately, he resigned following a major train accident as he felt moral responsibility which killed 140 people in post-Independence era. Hence, under his Prime Ministership, he made it a point to prevent train mishaps.

The above anecdote is a mere depiction of what constitutes 'success-code'. Inter-linking the ingredients, only when an individual/community/society or an entire civilization has the courage to acknowledge the misdoing and promise to improve on it, the standard of living as well as the moral fiber stays at a pedestal.

This simple yet value-centric "success-code" is not a child's play. It requires years of evolution and maturity to achieve stability. For instance, in the political scenario the birth of a nation may happen in silos but its rise or fall is absolutely dependent on the ingredients of the "success-code". Case I, involves democracies where natural rights are respected and adhered. They are at times penned down in a holy document – Constitution. Case II, is generally the reactionary states, where the sword is mightier than the pen. Thus, Case I is more likely to sustain than the latter and helps in installing constitutional propriety.

Taking a look at the economy section, the current Indian government by acknowledging the impending slowdown is a positive sign in a negative space, which in turn has made its ministries to burn the midnight oil and identify and take on targeted measures to prevent a cyclical slowdown.

The "success-code" has crept into the cultural aspect of the society as well. Recently Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada issued an apology for being insensitive and racist when he was in college. Thus, just by accepting the wrong he committed couple of years back has brought happiness to millions in the community.

The corporate sector breathes onto the "success-code" but it is recent century's doing. This is also credited to the fact that the consumer has become an important, aware stakeholder thus treating him as an important player in the process. The recent recalling of the Johnson and Johnson faults him implants is a sign towards knowing the mistake

and rectifying the same. Same goes with how Apple made it a definite point to replace all its 2015 Macbook Pro batteries so as to prevent damages.

Drawing connections from the above, the boom in technology advances banks on the "success-code" for its existence. A very apt parallel in this regard are the industrial revolutions. James Watt to Sam Pitroda to Klaus Schwab had the will-power to break and make a better future, as centuries pass by. In the age of self-driven cars and robots as housekeepers, it becomes very crucial for the makers to own up if something goes south and keep on improving to fight in the cut-throat market scenario. Examples would include the ever changing bitcoin technologies, internet of things etc.

Philosophical school of thoughts has been society centric and dynamic in itself. The forever debate between classical-Keynesians-Monetarists and the non-versions of the same have served its due purpose. For instance, classical like Adam Smith flourished till great depression of 1929. Post that a new set of people like Sir J.M. Keynes brought to the light new reasons. But the former school survived by Fredrick Hayek rectified the past mistakes and now such names recipients of the highest praise.

The current reversal of the section 377 in India which denied the identity to the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community is a shining example of how bold reforms come through only when the Supreme Court of India came to terms with the archaic provisions and did everything in its capacity to improve.

The much needed heed that is being paid to the environment is appreciated and at the same time, is essential. The renewal of Kyoto Protocol into Paris Agreement (2015) and a push to the renewable sections like India-France's commendable partnership in the International Solar Alliance is a point in the direction that years and years of abuse of the environment through means like exploiting non-renewable need to come to an end, so as to achieve sustainable development. At the national level, the Indian government has installed a new ministry - Jal Shakti ministry. By doing this, it reconciles with the fact that India is a water-stressed nation and if urgent steps aren't taken it will become a water scarce nation by 2045. It is visible in statistics in the 1950s, annual water availability was near 5000bcm and currently it has dropped to a miserable 1700bcm. Thus, by starting a Jan Andolan to save water it will prevent such a situation where:

"Our great grandparents saw water in lakes and ponds Our parents saw water in packaged water bottles and Our children (hopefully not) see water in mini-capsule."

The "success-code" has the capacity to influence an individual's lifestyle. Post 1991 India has faced a surge in lifestyle diseases like obesity, diabetics etc. Thus, the current Disease Burden Initiative report shows a horrifying truth that two extremes – malnutrition and obesity are underlying major health risk factors. Thus, by accepting the glory truth, various initiatives like National Nutrition Mission, Poshan Maah, Yoga etc. are taken up to meet targets. Via this, a societal acceptance and a behavioral change among individuals motivate them to benefit.

The dynamics in the International perspective is also served by the "success-code". Ireland, being a strict Catholic norms following country, where abortion is considered a sin, came up with the 'Savita Law', after the death of an Indian origin Dentist Savita where she was denied abortion despite of her precarious circumstances. In another incident, the Bishop of Canterbury (UK) got highly emotional at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and apologized for the shameless act of his ancestor. Thus, diplomacy, preferably soft is tested and approved by the "success-code".

The "success-code" has been there for quite some time. It has taken different forms but the essence of it – the ingredients have been refined with every incident. Citing from the Indian experience, to begin with, the Vedic age, a highly intellectual society but stratified in varnas was overhauled in the 6th century BC, with Buddha and Mahavir taking the centre-stage. Similarly, they tried to improve the socio-cultural status of women-indicating the gender-bias and domination of patriarchy. It took several ages and kingdoms to accept and rectify the oppression. Jumping to the Independence struggle, capable leaders like M.K. Gandhi, Nehruji, Patel, etc. realized the importance to promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable and safe would be the real freedom. Thus, during salt satyagraha, leaders like Sarojni Naidu, Kamla Chhatopadhyaya, etc. took the centre stage. During post-Independence era, recent verdicts like the Sabarlimala Temple have shown the determination to achieve a gender neutral society.

Thus, by depicting the diverse nature of the "success-code" the formula remains the same but the journey to accomplish the same involves sweat, revolution, courage, determination and staying true to one's ethics. Thus summing it up to be a "process" just how Rome was not built in a day, the "success-code" is an ever-evolving process with the intricate details of courage and determination.

Economy is Losing Out on the Potential of Women

Namrata Jain, IAS (AIR 12 CSE 2018)

Recently, an Indian woman was appointed as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of IMF. Until recently, the Commerce Minister of our country and the chairperson of the largest state-owned lender SBI were women. Global conglomerates like PEPSICO and BIOCON are headed by Indian women. While we celebrate all these facts, at the same time the recently released employment data of the country revealed a declining female Labour force participation ration (from approximately 36% in 2012 to 26% in 2017-18).

This entire hullabaloo regarding these figures naturally raises questions – why the women's role is so important in the economy and what are the reasons we are not able to harness this potential. In the following essay, we will try to answer these questions and look out for possible solutions.

Women constitute one-half of the population of any country and therefore one half of the potential workforce. Their non-involvement in labour market means we are already foregoing half of the country's human resource. World Bank estimates that better inclusion of women in workforce will improve its economic growth rate by at least 1.5 percentage points if 50% of its women join the workforce.

Also, women are mainly responsible for purchase decisions at home. That means, consumption patterns in the economy are heavily influenced by women. Having women in marketing and higher management will allow companies to better understand this consumer segment and better cater to it.

Women also are generally more pre-disposed to care for education and health needs of the family. Empowered women with better awareness and access will lead to a more skilled and healthy future workforce.

All this establishes the importance women hold in the economy of any country. However, despite this, countries around the world and India in particular, have been unable to tap into this potential of women.

The foremost reason for this has been the low HDR of women in India. Both educationally and health-wise, women lag behind their male counterparts. Census 2011 shows that while male literacy in India is more than 70%, female literacy is close to 60%. This becomes even more glaring in rural areas.

These differences can largely be boiled down to societal attitudes towards women. Women are considered 'paraya dhan' who would be married off to another household and therefore, investing in their education is considered wasteful.

Also, after marriage, since their role is that of a primary caregiver, they are seldom allowed to work outside. Another issue is that the jobs available for women are restricted. Women are not considered eligible for many jobs and are therefore confined to jobs like nursing, apparel industry in the formal sector and as domestic helps in the informal sector.

Even upon entering jobs, there is an informal glass ceiling where high quality, top jobs are restricted for men since there is a high attrition rate among women once they are married and/or have children.

Apart from this, the work environment is often not conducive for women. For security purposes, women are unable to work late night shifts and there is a high prevalence of sexual harassment at workplace recently highlighted through the #Metoo movement.

Companies also find it burdensome and economically unviable to provide for maternity benefits like maternity leaves and daycare facilities like crèches as made mandatory under the recent Maternity Benefits Act.

For all these reasons, it has been difficult to improve the female participation in labour force. While these problems are structural and also societal, various steps can be taken to improve the situation right from the childhood days.

Improving education levels comes first. In this regard, promoting education as is being done through Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Sukanya Samriddhi accounts, to effect behavioural change, can be complemented with focus on financial literacy and skill up gradation/acquisition in latest technologies.

Self-employment is the greatest source of empowerment. In this regard, promoting financial inclusion through women self help groups and startups through MUDRA loans are being done. Besides, women-centric incubators can be established as well.

Making it easier for women to work in formal sector would entail providing paternity leaves along with maternity benefits, promoting flexi-work hours and work from home for women and making it mandatory to provide cab services.

Improving work environment through appointment of independent women directors, mandatory and effective Internal Complaints Committee to report workplace abuses and

checking of glass ceilings through equal pay for equal work law enforcement would go a long way.

At the same time, it needs to be emphasized that all these measures will only come to reality when societal attitudes towards women change and companies are made to understand the economic and cultural benefits women bring to their organizations.

Only when this is realized, will we have truly tapped and utilized the potential of women in our economy. Then we would not need to count women achievers on our figures tips as every household would then have produced a daughter equally capable as a son.

The Greater the Difficulty, the More Glory in Surmounting it

Namrata Jain, IAS (AIR 12 CSE 2018)

The world remembers the heroes. Heroes are those who despite innumerable difficulties have come out at the top. An everyday achievement where the odds were not set against us does not seem like an achievement at all.

Even our mythological stories tell us so. Although it was the Crown Prince Arjun who was known as the greatest archer in the world, people still remember the poor and exploited Eklavya who surmounting his Guru's reluctance, learned the art from afar in a forest. The fact that he had to pay the price of his disobedience with his thumb, adds to the charm of the hero that was Eklavya.

Why is it that his difficulties were the reason of his glory? What does glory entail? And do only difficulties result in glory? Are everyday tasks not praiseworthy? These will be the questions we will try to answer in the following essay.

Glory means worldwide appreciation. A child is appreciated by parents when she performs well in a test. When the child performs consistently well, she would be congratulated but after a point of time, everyone will come to expect that the child is naturally capable and her achievements will become a normal phenomenon.

However, if a child with poor track record suddenly performs well in a test one day and also beats the child who consistently performs well, thus will not only result in appreciation from her parents but also the teacher would proudly present her example to the whole class to learn from.

This points to a very important reason why greater the difficulties, greater is the glory. While the same feat when achieved by a normal person does not become the talk of the town, when achieved by an underdog invites everyone's praise. The reason is HOPE and a positive example for anyone who is struggling in life.

This is the reason because of which people like the Phogat sisters became a role model for girls in Haryana in wrestling. If they can overcome gender biases in a predominantly patriarchal society and that too in a sport known for men, we can also fight societal perceptions.

Another reason why greater difficulties result in greater glory is that it broadens the frontiers of human potential. We find satisfaction and pleasure that humans have yet again conquered a new milestone.

The landing of the first astronauts on moon in 1969 was one such feat. Humans were able to not only go past the Earth's gravitational force but also enter moon's atmosphere and step on a new celestial object. That is why we see a constant race among nations on who could go farthest and first in space.

Even at an individual level, overcoming nature imposed restrictions makes for a splendid display of human power. The more unachievable the goal, the more pride we feel.

That is why, the 'firsts' are always remembered. The first man to climb the Mt. Everest is praiseworthy himself, but the first woman to do so becomes extra special. And this is why Bachendri Pal will always be remembered. She did not only surmount the harsh terrains of the mountain, but being a woman, she displayed that women are no less than men.

This brings us to the question why everyday tasks cannot be glorified. Do they not give us HOPE, are they not a reflection of human persistence and motivation and do they not hone our skills?

The simple answer to this is that the tasks which have now become mundane were also once new and achieving them the first time invited similar glory. Now since they have been already achieved, human beings naturally curious have moved onto new arenas.

The charm is in the new, yet unconquerable and hence more difficult by those who have traditionally been marginalized. In overcoming these physical, natural and societal restraints lies the source of glory. These obstacles excite the human mind to see how one overcomes them.

Therein lays the essence of human development and progress so far. Glory is the fruit for our hard work and courage. And therefore, the greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it.

Expect the Best, Prepare for the Worst, Capitalise on What Comes

Pradeep Kumar Dwivedi, IAS (AIR 74 CSE 2018)

Expectation, preparation and capitalisation are three wheels of a cycle called life. Every day we expect something to happen, we prepare for something which we have planned for future, and we try to avail the opportunities that are present at the moment. These three words however philosophical or distant from each other may seem, are binded by a common thread called story of success. Every single example of success and every single example of inspirational life has gone through all these steps of expecting, preparing and capitalizing thereon.

Now the question before us is what to expect? What to prepare for and what to do at the moment because 'present' is what we have got right now, future is yet to come and past has already gone. Expectation signifies hope – hoping for something that we desire, that which we want to see in the society around us and the world around us.

Hope is a magical word which has done wonders since ages. Hope brings positive energy which in turn gives us belief on our strengths. Without hoping for desired result, it's almost impossible to proceed. Hope for better future is what makes a student study hard, hope for bringing medals to country is what makes an Olympian devote his entire time to practice. If somebody loses hope about some task, depression and detachment is bound to follow.

Hope is what inspires us to begin working towards our dream. Like Plato said 'WELL BEGUN is HALF DONE'. India would not have become a free nation if our freedom fighters didn't hope for a country without foreign rule. America would have still struggled with citizenship rights of black population if great Abraham Lincoln did not hope for an equal and just society.

Indian paralympic gold medal winner Deepa Malik lost both her legs in a traumatic accident. Yet she is a passionate motorcyclist, athlete and an inspiration for millions. In her felicitation ceremony, she emphasised that losing something or everything does not count unless you lose hope. Hope will make to regain everything with renewed vigour and energy.

Apart from expectation, another important wheel is preparation. Before going into the multiple aspects of preparation, it is necessary to understand why preparation is necessary, and how much we should prepare?

Expectation, although, provides positive energy, yet harsh realities of life are to be faced and to tackle these harsh realities effectively, we need to prepare. Preparation is about assessing the risks and difficulties and planning for them in advance.

Napoleon once famously said "Every battle is first won in the mind" which means that every battle requires a planning, assessing the worst possible scenario and, with our limited resources, approaching that scenario with our best shot. All the great people who succeeded have endlessly prepared for the worst case scenario.

Mo Farah, the long distance runner of England, fell on the track while running during Olympics, it looked like all his preparations, endless hard work will go in vain, but he won the race. That is the magic of preparing for worst case scenario.

Mohammad Ali once said that "I don't fear a person who practices a thousand punches per day but at the boxer who practices one punch thousands times" because the perfection that comes with preparation is ultimate and glory is bound to come.

In spite of all the expectations and preparations, all that we have in our hand is the present, the opportunities that we have in present demand their best utilisation and here comes the role of the art of 'capitalisation'. Capitalisation simply means expecting best results out of everything that we have without whining and whimpering about what we don't have.

Capitalisation requires the attitudes of accepting challenges as an opportunity. However difficult the situation may look, it is accompanied by inherent opportunities and those who identify these opportunities wrapped in cover of difficulty are bound to excel, are bound to be the inspiration to many.

In a scene of 'CHAK DE INDIA' a Hindi movie, coach Kabir Khan is not worried by the girls of his team uniting against him because he smells an opportunity in this process. He uses this incident for building the attitude of unity and team spirit among girls. He takes this newly born unity forward and translates it into a world cup winning team, a team which is unfazed by any challenge.

Though the story told above is fictional, yet it exemplifies the importance of sensing opportunity in every challenge. Another example of great economist Mohammad Yunus Khan who took the challenge of financial inclusion of rural population of Bangladesh and taking this task by him as an opportunity for him to do something for the country and society created the famous 'Grameen Bank'. It is the result of his efforts that Bangladesh is now a country with a better financial inclusion status for its population.

It is clear from the above discussion that success and life both are linked by a thread which contains expectation, preparation and capitalisation. Expecting the best gives us energy required, preparation gives us the skills required and capitalisation provides us the fruit or the good result and together they form a partnership which transforms into an inspirational life.

This strategy of 'Expect the best, prepare for the worst and capitalize on what comes' needs to be applied in present day problems of global warming and climate change, terrorism tackling and bringing equality and justice to every strata of the society.

Climate change needs to be looked upon with hope that every country will understand this menace and come at a common platform. Nobody had thought that it would get so much attention when 'club of Rome' explained it first, yet the hope and efforts have taken the problem to be in a positive direction. Preparation in this case is building adaptation strategies and capitalisation is to take positives out of every engagement and make them happen in real world.

Similarly, these principles can bring the desired results in tackling terrorism and building equality and justice. Even the 'Disaster management' concept is almost entirely based on 'expecting the best and preparing for the worst' strategy.

Success and solution to every problem requires a strategy and initiating thinking on that strategy needs expecting positive results out of it, preparing for every outcome and capitalizing on every opportunity. These are the external principles to be followed in life. Cribbing and whining does not bring any good and only those who followed these principles rose to the top of the world.

Hence every human being with all patience and fortitude should keep making efforts, results are bound to come.

"KAMYABI CHOOMEKI KADAM EK DIN EK DIN"

Role of Media in Elections

Pradeep Kumar Dwivedi, IAS (AIR 74 CSE 2018)

In 2005, the yearly World Press Freedom Day conference emphasized the role of media in transparencies, deepening democracy and ensuring accountability of election management body during the electoral process. The conference also emphasized the link between election management body and media and role of media as communicator and role of election management body as regulator.

This is one of several examples when media's importance has been highlighted and deliberated upon for a fair and transparent democratic process. This takes us to questioning, what constitutes media? How media plays a role in electoral process? How positively and negatively media can affect the results of an election and the process of election? What are the ethical issues of present time and what are the ideals that media should follow?

Media has been termed as 'fourth estate' of the democracy together with executive, legislature and judiciary. Being the fourth pillar, it plays multidimensional roles in this era of information technology. Media in twenty first century not merely means press and television, it has leaped beyond these boundaries and now social media has taken an equal importance in this area. Hence media can be defined as every medium that facilitates the flow of information to multiple audience.

Election commission understanding the role of media and legislature in Representation of People's Acts has provided for allotment of some time on national television to every political party. This itself explains that our legislators have understood the role of media for a transparent and fair electoral process.

The role of media in elections is not merely restricted to providing information about election dates and election commission guidelines. It goes beyond that. It provides for an informed citizenry. Media's duty and role is to make public aware about the credentials of candidates, provide a platform to debate on various issues which form the political agenda of parties, debating and analysing the manifestos and its repercussions without taking any partisan stances, and providing medium for the top leadership to convey their intentions to electorate.

Media's role is not restricted to pre-election campaign and debates only. After the elections, it is media's duty to ensure that the process is running transparently, exposing and making into public notice any irregularity, if running anywhere, noting down the concerns that arise in the process of election and making authorities aware about them so that next time these concerns can be rectified.

The 2012 elections of Bengal is an example before the world where media took active part by visiting every booth, talking to election officers, electorate and authorities and ensuring that transparency is maintained. This active role of media has helped in a big way in regaining the confidence of voters on electoral process there.

Roles are many and multidimensional. Examples also are many and multidimensional in a similar way. Constant concerns are being raised about the role of media in election process and in general. Ownership of media houses by political masters is one big concern. These channels instead of airing neutral and informed opinion based on rational evidences, try to take partisan sides and work for their political masters to help them in election.

Increasing race of TRP has led to sensationalization of news for gaining public attention and in the quest to sensationalise and serve 'masala' news to audience, relevant issues go deep down in the priority list. Another menace that is severely harming transparency is the growing instances of paid news; political parties and candidates hire media houses by throwing away hefty amounts and media houses become prone to selective reporting, and giving attention to the party of their interest. Since it is well known that media helps and influences the shaping of opinion, so paid news hampers the formation of a rational opinion.

Media trial by several journalists ends up in misrepresenting many people without even any proof of their guilt or even when the matter is sub judice. Many media houses repeatedly announce same person guilty and this affects that person's credibility and even if he may not be that corrupt or not involved in the crime, he ends up losing. Even Supreme Court of India has raised concerns about media trials and warned media houses not to try to establish anyone's guilt when the matter is sub judice.

The use of social media for defaming rivals and making political gains for electoral interest has been a matter of concern. In the recent exercise of demonetisation, many reports about relation of Ujit Patel (Governor RBI) and Mukesh Ambani has been regularly spread which are completely false and later found to have been related with influencing opinion for UP assembly elections. Similarly, social media has been negatively used during Muzaffarnagar riots to polarise the voters on communal lines, in a recent case some news report telecasted that Keshav Prasad Maurya's daughter is having ₹20 crore of new currency but later it turned out to be a false news as he has no girl child.

These instances of negative role of media in electoral process demand a self introspection by media houses as well as a tough and strict regulatory regime. One of the

7 sins described by Gandhiji is 'corporate without morality' in their functioning. Ethical journalism should be the guiding principle for journalists.

Ethical journalism demands that journalist or media houses should telecast everything with objective evidences. They should not engage in partisan interests and constantly seek excellence in ensuring transparency be it in electoral process or be it in day-to-day governance.

Another key to transparent and positive media is a strong regulatory regime. Election commission should play the part of regulator on media during the electoral process and a law should be enacted in this regard providing election commission sufficient powers.

Last but not the least is the need of better training schools for journalists and active role of media fraternity in this regard. Media should act as self regulator because "self regulation if achieved is the best regulation". Value chain and value system of media houses should be directed towards ethical journalism and hence a transparent media.

It is evident and a proven fact that for democracy to go deep and to ensure its functioning, a strong and transparent media is necessary, hence, media houses should realise their role in the process of nation building and deepening democracy and playing an active and healthy role in election process.

Cooperative Federalism in the Era of Developmentalism

Rajarshi Shah, IAS (AIR 81 CSE 2016)

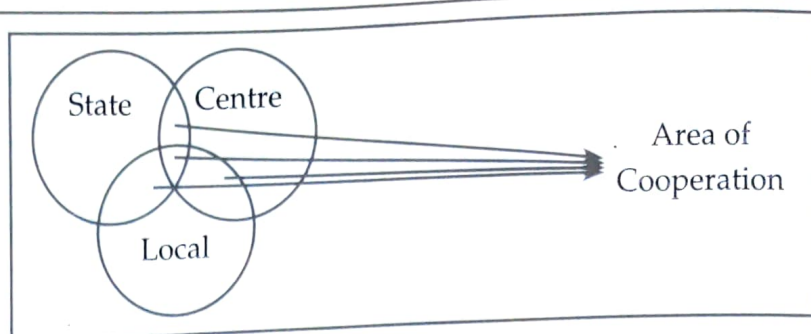
Cooperative federalism means different units of government – centre, state, local, etc. are equal partners and play important roles in the development of states and the nation as a whole. In the era of developmentalism i.e. moving on the path of faster, sustainable and more inclusive development, cooperative federalism has become much more important than before. This is because, development of local units can only ensure the development of states and it is only with the development of states that nation can develop as a whole. This requires that all these units are empowered with sufficient powers, funds and other resources to perform their respective functions without unnecessary encroaching upon each others' domain and functioning in an interdependent and collaborative manner to bring about empowerment of people and an integrated development of nation.

World over, different nations through their written or unwritten constitutions have prescribed the type of relationships between various units of government. In Britain, there is unitary form of government but yet we witness cooperative federalism between national government and local units. This particularly gained significance in the form of new localism in 1997 under Tony Blair Government with the devolution of managerial power to local units for an enhanced and speedy delivery of civic amenities and greater citizen participation in the process of development.

In the US, where there is strictly federal form of government, cooperation between the President and Senate is essential for various national and international matters.

Indian federation has been described by various scholars as quasi-federalism and has the provision of cooperative federalism in the constitution itself. This is present in legislative, administrative and financial areas. The provision of Rajya Sabha, inter-state council, resource distribution between states and the centre through constitutional body-finance commission are all in the direction of cooperative federalism.

With the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments to bring government closer to people, a new federal unit – local self-government was introduced and thus the cooperation became more significant. Hence, cooperative federalism under current scenario can be viewed as:



In the context of developmentalism which has evolved from welfare of citizens to empowerment of citizens with the addition of new contemporary trends and challenges like sustainable development, growing complex law and order problems, emphasis on good governance, to weed out corruption, cooperative federalism has become much more significant.

The achievement of goals under Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development goals, achievements of national priorities, poverty removal, unity and integrity of nation, etc. all require immense cooperation between centre and states.

Indian constitution has prescribed separation of powers between centre and states through Union and state lists respectively. Economic reforms on certain important issues like taxation reforms, land acquisition, labour reforms fall either in state list and concurrent list. These reforms are essential for the success of Make in India, ease of doing business, reducing inequalities and reverse the trend of jobless growth. As a result, meaningful cooperation between centre and states is required for the pursuit of national interest.

India currently witnesses the demographic dividend i.e. youngest population in the world. To reap the benefits of demographic dividend, we need a healthy, educated and skilled workforce. Again as these subjects are either in state list or concurrent list, centre has to handhold and guide the states and simultaneously allow flexibility to design schemes and programs according to their needs.

To ensure developmentalism, we also need peaceful environment in the states. The growing complexity of law and order and the growth of communism, regionalism, terrorism, extremism and naxalism hampers the developmental process. Again the centre needs to persuade the states to take positive reforms, help in modernization and bring better coordination between centre and states to ensure peace and stability which is a key driver of developmentalism.

It also needs to be noted that whenever there has been neglect and abuse of cooperation, developmental process has derailed. The era of 1970s and 80s when there was frequent imposition of President's rule, politicization of governor's post and centralized planning adopted by Planning commission brought about the so called Hindu rate of growth - 2.5%.

Under the current government, both cooperative and competitive federalism has been given push. NITI Aayog has been formed to replace the Planning Commission,

zonal councils have been revived, and meaningful municipal reforms are being pursued through smart city project and swachh bharat ranking.

However, there is much to be done. Some experts say that NITI Aayog has been functionally directionless and is unable to bring about systematic reforms at the state level. The interstate council has become a defunct body. Though the government has accepted recommendations of 14th Finance commission, its own allocations towards state plans have fallen drastically.

Apart from that, there has been no meaningful devolution of funds, functions and functionaries by the states to the local governments. The absence of this devolution results in many problems like 21% population being below poverty line, 6 crore Indians without house and so on.

Thus, when India will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day we are aspiring for many universal goals like complete eradication of poverty, universal nutrition, housing for all, education, etc. But, all these will be possible if there is meaningful cooperation between all units of government. The need is to remove the differences and build upon achievements through multi-stakeholder, approach and rising above the party lines. It is then only India can realize her destiny and empower her citizens.

Globalization is Making our Societies More Creative and Prosperous, but also More Vulnerable

Ravi Mittal, IAS (AIR 61 CSE 2015)

Globalization is akin to the Indian cultural value of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' which means world is one family. It involves movement of people, goods and ideas across nations transforming the world into a 'global village'. It has been facilitated by modern discoveries and inventions while acting like a double edged sword with its both positive as well as negative implications. Leveraging on its benefits and avoiding its negative fallouts can ensure faster, sustainable and inclusive growth for our nation.

The idea of globalization has been facilitated by many modern scientific inventions and discoveries, and also by the evolution of ideas about the nature of human existence by philosophers, thinkers and intellectuals. Modern means of transport like telephone, air travel, information metamorphosis which have brought all information at the distance of a click are some of the factors which catalyzed the transformation.

Globalization has had an impact on all spheres of life, affecting individuals of all age, gender, caste, religion without any discrimination. Its impact on culture, society, economy, and security of nations, environment and economy, field of science is especially notable.

Globalization has promoted the spread of ideas related to culture, customs, rituals, beliefs, traditions, arts, music, literature and so on at such a fast rate that is unparalleled in the history of mankind. It has compelled the societies to introspect their nature and they are now inculcating the best practices from world over. At the same time, it has posed a challenge of sustaining their identities. As Thomas Friedman, a noted expert on globalization said, "The biggest challenge in the era of globalization is to maintain our identities while discoursing the ways to sustain ourselves". Due to this, various languages, cultures, have been struggling to sustain their survival, while also presenting them an opportunity to take it to the global level through vehicles of globalization promoting the principle of 'Anekantvada' i.e. plurality of ideas as propounded by Mahavira.

In the sphere of economy, it has brought prosperity through 'comparative advantage' where the various countries utilize their resources according to their best advantages and allow greater integration of world markets. Thus, it has allowed efficient allocation of resources, generated employment but at the same time, it poses unique challenges.

Failure of markets in one economy affects the entire world e.g. global recession of 2008-09, Asian crisis of 90's. It is against principle of 'self-determination' since bad decisions by one nation affects other nations also.

On the social front, globalization has been a boon. New, students in remote corners of world can take lessons from best of professors of the world through e-learning in the form of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC). It has at the same time, allowed sharing best mutual practices in the field of healthcare and agriculture which has everlasting impact on the prosperity of nations and its people.

Moreover, globalization of NGO's i.e. social sector and social movements go a long way in alleviating issues as poverty, gender discrimination, and environment consensus and so on. A glaring example of how globalization impacted social and political movement is 'apartheid' movement in South Africa in which all the nations of the world virtually took part. A major area of focus in this regard in modern era is issues related to gender inequality and discrimination in few nations. Globalization has helped to solve the issue from multiple perspectives and gathered such a momentum, which is unprecedented.

Since capitalism has been one of the facilitator of globalization, economics based on efficiency has impacted the vulnerable sections of the society particularly the old and disabled, negatively and has reduced space for them, but ingenious solutions which globalization creates are a blessing in disguise for the vulnerable section.

Criminals & crime related activities like terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking, piracy, cyber-attacks, organized crime syndicates have got a boost from globalization by leveraging on its products and services. It has facilitated their promotion and expansion as evidenced by recent rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a terrorist group which is using the tools of globalization to inflict terror, violate rights of individuals, and causing massive damage. This is one of the grimmest negative fallout.

However, on the other hand, it has allowed the issues of 'disaster management' to be tackled jointly by the entire humanity in terms of preparedness, and response e.g. recent earthquake in Nepal drew attention of entire world with help coming in all possible forms, which was not possible before.

Thus, the experience vis-à-vis globalization has been diverse for India as well as for other countries. At one hand, it has made our societies more creative and prosperous, while on the other, it has made us vulnerable. We must remember the ideal of 'Ati Sarvatra Varjayet' i.e. excess of anything or extremes of anything are bad. Therefore, there is a need to maintain a judicious balance as far as our role in being an important element of the process of globalization is concerned. Balance involves absorbing and capitalizing on the advantages and at the same time avoiding and effectively tackling its disadvantages.

In the end, 'unity in diversity' is a source of envy for other countries and one of our strengths. In this respect, it is important to channelize the energy of globalization in making our society more creative and prosperous. In this way, globalization with its vulnerabilities will empower us to achieve growth and prosperity for all as stated in the following lines:

“Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah Sarve Santu Niramaya”

Vision of a Clean India: Prospects and Challenges

Ravi Mittal, IAS (AIR 61 CSE 2015)

"If you do not clean your backyard, your Swaraj shall be stinking" Gandhiji once said while addressing his disciples at the Sevagram Ashram while underscoring the importance of cleanliness. At that time, Gandhiji emphasized the importance of clean India in the backdrop of national struggle for freedom by linking it with the idea of 'Swaraj'.

The idea of 'Clean India' cannot hold more importance in any era than the present one. The vision encompasses multiple dimensions of our society, not just limited to social, economic, health, education, gender and environment. Although, it presents us with multiple challenges, but the opportunity it creates promises to transform India into prosperous nation in the truest of terms.

In terms of social aspect, 'Clean India' is intricately linked to the rights of scheduled castes and other backward classes. While it ensures cleanliness for all, at the same time, it promotes the ideal of 'social equity' by overcoming the inhumane practices of 'manual scavenging'. Abolition of such practices is an important part of the vision.

Also, it gives emphasis to 'preventive healthcare' where by ensuring cleanliness, large number of communicable diseases like dengue, chikungunya and others like typhoid, diarrhea can be prevented. It will reduce the unnecessary burden on the poor in terms of health expenditure, loss of employment, and at the same time, help to achieve goals of reducing Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) by ensuring better survival chances of the infants who are more susceptible to such diseases. It, thus, acts an important pillar in ensuring a holistic 'Health for All'.

Moreover, it has been seen in Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) that in areas where schools have toilets, the attendance and enrollment ratios are much higher. This emphasizes the importance of clean environment on education outcome.

Not only are the social, health and education aspects intricately linked with cleanliness, but it has a strong association with gender issues, environmental impact, as well as tourism and overall economic development. In terms of gender inequality, toilets in rural areas ensure the dignity of women. One of our fundamental duties is to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. 'In this respect, ensuring sanitation at homes is a

duty of citizens. It also increases the levels of girls' education because it has been seen that girls are motivated to go to school which have toilets and are properly maintained.

Cleanliness has a deep impact on environment especially when we are facing the challenges of climate change. Moreover, innovative techniques turn compost into 'renewable energy', which can generate power in small industries and households. Thus, proper management of waste as part of 'Clean India' vision has enduring effects on environment and energy needs.

Tourism gets a major boost if cleanliness is ensured; adequate provision of toilets is made at sites. Thus, it indirectly impacts employment generation, brings in much crucial foreign exchange and promotes economic development. So, it is not only a consequential imperator but a matter of duty to ensure cleanliness. In this respect, vision of 'Clean India' serves this goal.

To achieve this success, various steps have been taken till now by the government, individuals as well as the social sector. Government came up with the 'Total Sanitation Campaign' renamed as 'Nirmal Bharat' and now re-launched as more comprehensive campaign called 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'. On the individual level, efforts such as 'Sulabh International' are commendable examples of social entrepreneurship to achieve social goals and objectives. The program of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is linked to clean water, sanitation, waste disposal, behavioral change communication, construction of toilets and so on. Even judiciary has played proactive role towards the realization of goal by declaring 'Right to clean environment' as an implied right under Article 21 of the constitution.

However, overall efforts by all the stakeholders have not delivered desired results. Its impact on the social front is yet to be fully seen. At the same time, impact on health, education, economy, environment, tourism and gender issues is not as robust as had been visualized. The vision, in the light of its outcome, has presented with many challenges.

'Converting outlays into outcomes' is the major challenges that the government faces. Due to diversity of our nation, challenges also differ according to geography, society and people. While generating awareness about the importance is a challenge in UP, Bihar and other less literate states, at the same time reducing leakages to ensure delivery of requisite services is a challenge in other places. Moreover, budgetary outlays for the purpose have been lower than required due to fiscal constraints.

Any solution to overcome the challenge should involve all the stakeholders and be directed towards comprehensive targeting of the issue. Both the Central and State governments with local governments i.e. Panchayati Raj shall have to act according to 'cooperative federalism'. NGOs, which act as eyes and ears of the government, have a big role to play at all levels. Furthermore, private enterprises should be encouraged to spend a part of their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) towards this objective. Towards the development of newer technologies, scientific fraternity in the national institutions can help in developing 'ingenious and indigenous solutions'.

To ensure full public participation, public awareness campaigns should be promoted along with enacting bye-laws to punish those who fail to follow the principles. Moreover, international cooperation such as from Singapore and Germany can bring in expertise in human resources and technology along with best practices. The campaign can be dovetailed with other initiatives such as 'Smart City', 'Make in India', 'Skill India' as well as 'Digital India' due to its comprehensive nature.

In the end, since India is the 'world's oldest civilization with youngest population' in order to leverage its strengths of 3Ds i.e. Demand, Democracy and Demography, vision of a clean India is sine qua non for ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth. 'Toilet seat' is as important for us as the 'UN seat' and only sustained commitment, proactive approach, single minded focus and strong administrative action can ensure the achievement of this goal. Although the vision poses multiple and diverse challenges, but at the same time it presents us with great opportunities which has eternal prospects for our development. As Victor Hugo said, "Nobody can stop the idea whose time has come", the idea of clean India will fructify in all its aspects and it's time has come. Vision of clean India will ensure a prosperous nation with happy future for its children while ensuring Gandhiji's dream of 'wiping tears from every eye' and India will achieve 'Swaraj' in the truest of sense.

Management of Indian Border Disputes – A Complex Task

Rishab Jain, IAS (AIR 23 CSE 2018)

India is bordered by 7 countries in the Northern and Eastern part. It shares long borders with Pakistan and China in the North and East, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh in East and a small portion with Afghanistan in the North. We also have a 7,000 km of coastline. Our border management is complex because of the varied terrain and topography, multiple nations, languages and cultures, historical reasons and global geopolitics. Recent Doklam standoff between India and China, redrawing of map by Nepal, regular terrorist incursions from Pakistani Soil, issues in Galvan valley shows the complexity of India's border disputes.

To understand why management of border disputes is complex, we must understand the history of such disputes.

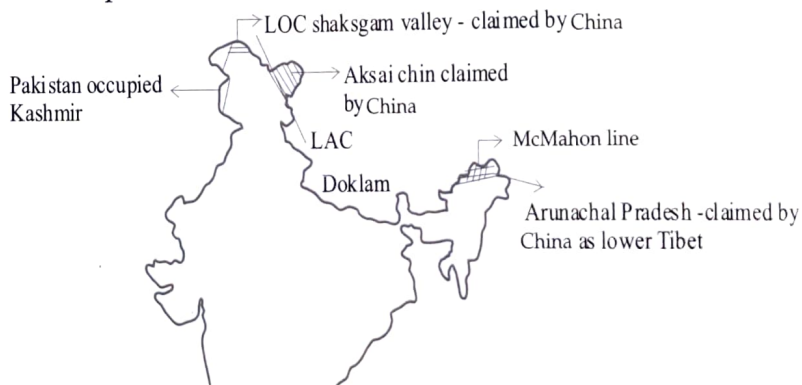


Fig 1: India and its border disputes

In the Western part, the border was delineated by Redcliff before independence. Though much was settled, in the Indo-Pak war of 1998, Pakistani tribes had occupied certain portions of Kashmir which is now known as line of control demarcated Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Border dispute management is complex here because the Pakistani establishment trains terrorists from Al-Qaeda and Taliban and arms them to create troubles, e.g. Uri attack and Pathankot attack. Though India has always tried to maintain peace through establishing Rail and Bus connectivity, providing medical visas, giving Most Favoured Nation status to Pakistan, these were not reciprocated from that side. Apart from these, the challenges of manning the borders in harsh weather and

terrain, religions radicalization in Kashmir, sleeper cells etc. have made solutions to border disputes with Pakistan complex. The military control over the government in Pakistan, near absence of democracy, non-independent judiciary have also made the dispute much complex to manage.

In the Northern and Eastern sector we share a long boundary with China. Though during our Independence, we didn't share any border, the sub segment annexation of Tibet by China brought two large countries much closer. Though India-Tibet border talks have solved many issues, Chinese government hasn't accepted those talks, hence, border dispute remains with Aksain Chin and Arunachal Pradesh being showed in China's map as their territory which is strongly opposed by India. Also, most of the points marked on map haven't been demarcated on the actual point which is causing disputes with China claiming a larger territory than one that's settled e.g. Pangong Tso Lake. Also, the China-Pakistan Economic corridor under the Belt and Road Initiative has escalated further tensions as these infrastructure projects violate the sovereignty of India. With China's growing economy, one-party controlled government and aggressive stance along the South China Sea as well as other border countries, the issue will grow even more complex in future.

In the Eastern sector, Nepal and Bhutan and all friendly neighbours are there, and they act as buffers to China's border issues. But in recent days we could see the Nepal's communist government's growing bonhomie with China. This could be seen by China's railway connectivity with Kathmandu, teaching Mandarin in Nepal schools, supply of Petroleum, changes in Nepal's map etc. Growing Chinese influence is making border disputes more complex.

As from the above discussion we could see that our major border dispute is with Pakistan and China. With countries like Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, border areas all well-settled. In fact, with Bangladesh, through the 100th constitution Amendment Act, we have exchanged various enclaves. With Pakistan, the dispute has become complex due to historical reasons such as Pakistan's non-cooperative attitude, continuous terror activities, radicalization etc. "Terror and talks cannot happen together" is the stand taken by India after Pakistan's terrorists supportive acts.

Steps taken by India

India has solved several border disputes in the past through continuous negotiations and diplomacy. An account of such solved disputes is as follows:

- (1) **India** – Pakistan border dispute at Rann of Kutch has been solved successfully through peace talks.
- (2) **Sikkim** – which was claimed by China as its own territory was also solved.
- (3) **Katchatheevu** – a small island was given to Sri Lanka.

(4) **Transfer of Enclaves** – between India and Bangladesh was also carried out through a constitution amendment act.

Thus India is a peace-loving nation which always goes for peace talks first to solve any dispute. Even for the current border disputes, India has put on several mechanism and institutions in place.

Regular confidence Building Measure exercises and talks happen at border areas to ensure peace and tranquility. Track II diplomacy works behind the screen before any major meeting with China. India is a part of several international organizations such as BRICS, Shanghai cooperation organization etc. through these organizations we are able to speak and negotiate at the highest level. India is also actively utilizing the international forums such as UN Security Council as a non-permanent member, UNGA etc. to bring international attention to cross-border terrorism perpetrated by Pakistan.

With the recent constitutional amendments, Article 370 has been made as irrelevant and the status quo in Kashmir has been changed.

The economic and military powers are very important for any nation to solve major disputes in today's world. India is moving towards a \$5 trillion economy while militarily we are growing stronger every day. Having the 2nd largest standing army in the world, our military expenditure and indigenization of technology has also been consistently rising. Examples are the indigenization of LAC Tejas and 2nd Aircraft carrier INS Vikranth.

Apart from these measures border areas are getting strengthened on a regular basis. Supported by advanced technologies, Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System is being implemented. Also, through Hill area development program and Border area development program, basic infrastructures are getting created in those areas. Certain strategic projects like rail connectivity to Leh, Tawang, and Kashmir etc. would bring economic development in those areas and also enable the armed forces to ensure better control.

Due to the varied history, geography and culture, border management is a complex task. But with a strong economy, dynamic diplomacy and leadership, these disputes would be solved through discussions and will ensure a peaceful and resourceful neighbourhood.

Risk of Artificial Intelligence Outweigh Benefit

Abhisek Oswal, (AIR 154 CSE 2019)

“\$20 Trillion is what could be added to world economy in the next decade, with the adoption of Artificial intelligence,” read the newspaper headline as I was about to gulp my coffee. This made me curious to dig deeper into the article.

Change is the only constant and nothing could be stopped whose time has come. This is the era of globalisation soon to be transformed to digital villages. Artificial intelligence has the fire power to lead the evolution in multiple spheres.

Imagine you wake up in the morning, switching down your alarm. You move to kitchen and find that your favourite coffee is already brewed. Your car is on its mark to self-drive you to the office. That kind of easy life could be with a world of Artificial Intelligence.

But mind you that's the only beginning of this technology and its application and potential limit is equivalent to sky. Artificial intelligences will transform the way we work. The technology will provide equal opportunity, overcoming the biological limits. Female and male will be at par in terms of sphere and domain of employment because it is individuals who will be regarded and mind you 'Mind Has No Gender'.

Vulnerable could preserve their dignity, while robots take over inhuman work of manual scavenging. Disabled could use their brain power to excel and overcome the physical limit. People will move a step above in their carrier with new skills and opportunities like the big data and internet of things.

Mouse will replace tools, hands would be replaced by autonomous arms. Thus, output efficiency will improve astronomically. New budding entrepreneurs will find a wave of opportunity to invest and innovate. World will be a more secure place. Robots could guard our borders, safeguard the citizens and nation from state and non-state political actors. Life of soldiers due to frequent 'incidents' could be saved.

Good governance and informed decision this could be best possible outcome of artificial intelligence. Government could identify the needy target. Vulnerables will uplift

them from poverty. Blackboards are already being replaced by digital boards, doctors are reaching the remote areas via telemedicine thus overcoming the geographical limits.

Lessening of human interference will make the process transparent, smooth and corruption free. Timely decision could be rewarding for business where 'Time is money'. Manufacturing process could be made more efficient; ten men could be replaced by a single robotic arm, thus drastically cutting down the cost. Driverless metros, cars will be the new norm. Seamless, pollution free travel will ease the living style. But mind you risks outweighs the benefits, 'Think over it'.

With this the article concluded. The immense potential of artificial intelligence are truly limitless. But I thought is it panacea for all evolution taking place? Won't it have an ethical, societal economic repercussion? Will benefits weigh over the risk? Should one adopt the technology in all spheres and walk of life? With this I began questioning myself with a hope to find an answer.

An equal, gender less society? Yes at first instant artificial intelligence will provide equal opportunity to men and women. But will it reduce gender biasness or skewed sex ratio? With help of technology the child sex ratio has come down to alarming 917, thanks to sex selective abortion. Will it not further put the life of female in womb in danger?

New opportunities but far few? True that Artificial intelligence will create new skills, job market, improve efficiency and productivity. But the question is – Is it going to be universal or selected, will it not create another class of have or have nots?

One with low skills is surely going to miss the train; he will be left stranded and unemployed. This risk of structural shift in way we work surely will outweigh the benefit of artificial intelligence.

Fourth domain of warfare! Yes this is what I think that artificial intelligence will open new fronts of confrontation. True soldiers precious life would be saved, boundaries will be better safeguarded, but won't it have an ethical ramification? How can you accept a 'bot' to differentiate between an innocent and terrorist, child and enemy soldier. AI will overlook war – dharma' with sole motto to indiscriminately annihilate the opposition. The aforesaid benefits will put the humanity at risk.

And what about the privacy? The whole technology of AI would be based on data – the new oil. Won't it give an unfettered privilege to state surveillance on food, communication and activities. A free state would be turned into a police state, putting liberty at risk!

Making life easy or making life inactive? This is the next question I pondered upon. Yes to an extent artificial intelligence would help to overcome physical disabilities. But at the same time, it is making the human physically inactive. Football, cricket, tennis which were traditionally played on fields today took up the place on screens. This has ramification on health, making youth obese, reducing the cognitive and physical skills. Thus this is indirectly putting health at risk.

Good governance is only one side of the coin! I recollect reading, how a UK based Artificial intelligence company was able to access the data of online users and manipulated their decision during the national elections. AI, which shows the prospects of informed decision, also shows the other side of dictated decision. The technology is putting the ethos of democracy at risk.

Frankenstein Monster? The way and the pace AI is taking our space and workplace it is practically substituting humans. The intelligence implanted on the machine by human will make it capable enough to learn by experience. What if one day the machine intelligence overtakes human intelligence and reduce use of slaves. At the dangerous end it may even develop capability to refuse its master and at large eliminate him. This will put the entire human survival at risk.

With all such risks and danger should we stop the evolutionary technology and maintain status quo? To me this is not possible, since change is the only constant. But we also know that every change and evolution had a knee-jerk reaction and ramification but it gradually stabilised and acclimatised for good.

Historically, we are aware that when Henry Ford brought out his favourite four wheeler cars, it threatened the livelihood of cart pullers and carvans. But later this gave birth to new industries like wheels, gears, opened up new garages and today it is providing jobs to millions across globe.

I also believe that we are already amidst web of using Artificial Intelligence. Driverless cars to google navigation, Robot Waiters to stock market algorithm, AI has adapted and co-existed. It made our life easy and also created new innovative opportunities.

The future with AI is unavoidable but we could be future ready. Skilling the population to ensure technologically inclusive world evolving with limitations will make AI beneficial and outweigh the risks.

‘Any futuristic technology will be dangerous when it leaves behind a part of achieving the benefits and not the whole’.

Start by Doing What is Necessary, Then Do What's Possible and Suddenly You will be Doing What's Impossible

Shreyans Kumat, IAS (AIR 4 CSE 2018)

"Kaun kehta hai asman me surakh nahi ho sakta, ek patthar to tabiyat se ucchal k dekho yaro"

(It is possible to create a hole even in the sky, just try throwing a stone with all your willpower)

Is it possible to reach impossible? Why was it called impossible if it was possible? If it has been done by stalwarts, how can I do it? Here a Japanese proverb comes to rescue- 'If one can do it, anyone can do it and if one can do it, you must do it.' But how?

The topic of the essay provides us with the path. 'A job started is a job half done'- so it is important to start by doing whatever is necessary. At this level of experience we would easily phantom the extent or possibility in front of us. So the next step would be to do what's possible. Now, every next step from us would be beyond possible. Viola! We are now doing what's impossible.

But such things are easier said than done. Agree. But one has to start somewhere; something from nothing will or should lead to everything or not? Let us look at some examples.

One girl, belonging to small village wanted to study. But the surroundings didn't allow. Somehow, she reached school after fighting with her parents. Then she saw possibility of motivating other children to be students with her. She worked hard for it. Soon she faced problems from the terror group and even she had to take a bullet for her cause. Soon, she was inspiring millions of girls to attend school. Yes! Malala Yousafzai.

She showed that quality like perseverance and fortitude helped her in her journey. But can this apply at the level of an organization?

Ever heard about Grameen Bank? It is a world renowned microfinance institution which pioneered and perfected micro-lending. Mohammad Yusuf was an economics teacher in a university. He was distressed by the situation of the women in nearby areas. They lacked money but were very good artists. He didn't want to give charity.

Why give fish when you can teach how to fish? Mr. Yusuf loaned a women money at almost zero interest rate. It was much less than the moneylender rates. This allowed the women to benefit from loans by selling their art and also their self dignity was intact.

This start led to many possibilities and now, lakhs of institutions are working all over the world to help people come out of poverty.

But such an endeavour is possible at the level of society or nation? Just take a look at the Indian National Movement.

Revolts at different parts of the country especially of 1857 gave it the required start. First Moderates and then Extremists were exploring the possibility of Dominion status and soon, we demanded 'Poorna Swaraj' and no less. Finally, we achieved it on 15th August 1947.

In all the above examples it was necessity of education, of money and of autonomy which led to the start respectively. 'Necessity is the mother of all inventions.'

When we resolve and start doing what's necessary, it leads to invention and innovation. Early man can only dream of flying, but today we are sending astronauts to space. He could only use fire with flint stone and now we can't live without electricity.

But what is the use of all this if world would end because of global warming and sixth mass extinction and other such possible phenomenon. In this case too, we have started with what is necessary and exploring what is possible and surely with International cooperation in treaties of Paris, protocols like Montreal, CITES and conservation efforts by various organizations, we will achieve the impossible.

It's time that our country too starts doing what's necessary in every field. In a recent SBI report, experts warned India to achieve developed country status in next 10 years or we will miss the bus. This would mean a perpetual developing country status. NO!

Former President Late Shri APJ Abdul Kalam in many of his works has devised plans to use the demographic dividend, developing smart villages with PURA approach and has inspired youth to devote themselves to the cause of the nation.

Every citizen, in whatever field, way, state or region should start with doing what is necessary. We should start by being empathetic, tolerant, liberal, democratic and inclusive. Then we can look at the possibility of collaboration with people nearby to improve education, health, basic amenities etc. This will open more possibilities.

Indian constitution makers already gave us the necessary start as an ideal nation. It's time for citizens to imbibe those values and walk forward. When people will be in sync with those values and strive for sustainable development, miracles are bound to happen.

Taking inspiration from the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached', we need to inspire our dear ones with the path provided- start with necessary, do possible and see the magic happen.

Because impossible itself says 'I M POSSIBLE'.

The Greatest Threat to Our Planet is the Belief That Someone Else Will Save it

Shreyans Kumat, IAS (AIR 4 CSE 2018)

One fine morning, Mr. Mehta was enjoying his breakfast with the news on. News anchor was discussing how India is hosting the 'World Environment Day' by United Nations Environment Programme this year. The Theme was – 'Beating Plastic Pollution'. Mr. Mehta was delighted to hear the programme. He told his wife about the efforts of UNEP and also appreciated the steps taken by our country. Later that day, Mr. Mehta went to market and bought vegetables and fruits in various polybags. Due to the scorching heat, he also bought a coconut and threw it away with the straw after drinking.

Here, Mr. Mehta is an aware citizen but he is not putting those awareness points into action. He is just relying on the nation and UN to save the planet. But does such belief serve any purpose?

What is at Stake?

Literally our existence is at stake. According to a recent Living Planet report, we exhaust the yearly carrying capacity of earth by August 2 or 3. This means that it would take almost "two Earths" to fulfil human demands. Our habitat and practices at each level is causing harm to our planet.

Individually, we are drifting towards consumerism and materialism. Everyone is looking for more than what one can consume. Cosmetics, exotic items, leather wearable, fur etc. are new normal. We do not see the violence which went behind their production and just enjoy the fruits.

As a society, we are drifting away from values that cherished nature and were grateful for its fruits. In the run for becoming more prosperous, instances like 'Bellandur Lake' of Bangalore is becoming increasingly common.

As a nation too, we are running away from the responsibility of our actions. The Act of US leaving Paris Climate Agreement is condemnable. In the name of development, we are also destroying nature indiscriminately. We are suffering from ironic situations- wastage of food and food security; malnutrition and obesity.

Globally, despite many talks of a peaceful and sustainable world, horrors like Hiroshima and Nagasaki continuously reminds us of the impending third world war possibility. Rather than reducing consumption, we are relying on scientific advancement possibility to avert climate change.

Not just few people, but almost everyone is waiting for others to take the lead, solve problems and do some miracles so that our cherished planet could be saved.

Before It's Too Late

This impending threat could be averted with everyone's efforts – however big or small.

At individual level, we can start with 3R – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle to contribute towards saving the environment. Participation in events like 'Earth-Hour' where one switches off electricity for an hour could lead to a multiple effect. One can follow rules; take our jute or cloth bags to market for shopping instead of using polybags like Mr. Mehta.

As a family, we can have different dustbins for segregating wastes. This will also imbibe such values in the children. One can practice vertical gardening, roof gardening to get organic produce. Here one can use waste compost as a fertilizer as well.

As a society, awareness about various programmes could be the first step. This would make more 'environmentally responsible citizens'. Civil society initiatives like use of solar lamps under SOULs programme, using biodegradable appliances like Mitti Coll etc. would be steps in the right direction. Such efforts would also complement governmental efforts.

Governmental efforts are crucial in bringing about uniform and widespread reformation. In different aspects such as Mitigation, Adaptation and Funding, many steps are needed.

Legislations like Environment Protection Act, various pollution acts, rules and regulations like plastic management, e-waste management etc. and above all constitutional directive and duty to save environment should be the guiding light.

Using it, efforts to achieve the target of 33% forest cover in the country would ensure achievement of INDCs (Nationally determined contributions). This would also help India in getting better international status and easier technological access.

In the quest to use renewable energy, International Solar Alliance (ISA) by India reiterates that we are not waiting for someone else to save the planet. Use of renewable energy would solve both energy security and environmental problem, if pursued properly in the future.

Saving the ecosystem using traditional methods could be a positive step. Taking help of tribals in Joint forest management, sacred graves protection would ensure dense forests are safe. Improving under sea water agriculture practice of Kerala (included under

globally important agriculture heritage) on modern lines could be called an action with a foresight.

Learning from International best practices could save us from 're-inventing the wheel'. Collaborations with countries like Netherlands for waste management, Israel for water efficiency etc. would open many possibilities of better resource utilization.

Globally, being part of successful protocols and conventions like Montreal Protocol, Vienna convention, Kyoto Protocol has shown us that averting the threat is possible.

Not just through technology transfer and technology groupings, one can learn from noble acts. Recently, Senegal fans repeated the feat done by Japanese fans in the FIFA WC 2018. They cleaned plastic and other waste segregating them for easier disposal after the match was over. Everyone, an individual, society, nation and global grouping can learn from it.

Learning from present as well as past can help us bring a better future. Ancient Indian practices at every step ensured that environment is in harmony with human existence and vice-versa. Whenever resources were exploited, enough time was given to it to regenerate and rejuvenate e.g. shifting agriculture in earlier times.

Nobody then relied only on the king to do all the environment-friendly work and no one was deep under the material pleasures. Similarly, it is time that we learn and start taking action to save the planet. There are many ways to do it but one has to start somewhere.

If not for the ancestors who left this beautiful mother earth to us, we should do it for our next generations from whom we have borrowed it. In line with the ethos of humanity, environmentalism progress, we should strive for sustainable development. Aiming to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) in time in mission mode could be the way forward.

Unlike Mr. Mehta we should shed the belief that someone else would save the planet. We must be guided by the words of Gautama Buddha- 'Atma Deepo Bhavah' (Be your own light). While in our efforts to live a comfortable life, we must remember a very important thought given by Gandhiji and should swear to act as the trustee to the great resources provided by mother earth.

"The world has enough for everyone's needs but not for anyone's greed".

Live and Let Live

Consumption, Consumerism & Environment

Somesh Upadhyay, IAS (AIR 34 CSE 2016)

Little girl Sunita watches her richer counterpart shop bright new clothes for the upcoming festive season. She cravingly stares at them while breathing in the smokes off cars running by her shabby tent on the footpath. Sunita is a victim of consumerism.

Our modern economic systems hinge on mass-consumption. The measure of a country's 'growth' is defined by the amount of consumption. The industry, capitalists and governments push for higher growth by driving consumption. In such situation, we ignore the limit of our needs, breeding the culture of consumerism. And as Gandhiji pointed out much before Rio '92 conference, there is not enough for everyone's greed.

In our blind chase for consumerism-driven economic growth, we have failed to factor in the environmental cost. It is a capital that is not accounted for. The result is that we are exceeding earth's carrying capacity even as millions go hungry. The externalities are affecting the world's poor disproportionately by vitiating the environment.

Vandan Shiva in 'Stolen Harvest' has exposed the precarious environmental situation created by fast food chains like KFC. Water guzzling animal breeding farms is run on cleared Amazon forest land to feed the consumerism. At the same time the world is staring at water wars and global warming.

This unsustainable lifestyle promoted by consumerism has created glaring inequalities. For example, the Times Square, NY consumes as much electricity in one night as the entire Zimbabwe in one year. Such massive inequality further forces the poor to adopt unsustainable methods like log burning to meet their energy needs. Thus, the cycle of environmental degradation continues.

Closer home, we have seen the negative effects of unsustainable methods of agriculture in Punjab. In our focus on meeting consumption demands, the environmental costs were ignored. The result is salinated soil, depleted ground water and higher incidence of cancer.

Consumerism has promoted 'Climate Injustice'. The colonial countries and developed nations consume disproportionately larger amount of resources. However, their demands are met by vitiating the environment in poorer nations. The 5th IPCC Report points out

how the developed nations have exported their production factories and thus externalities to the developing nations.

Thus, while the cocoa farmer in Cameroon does not know what chocolate is, his farm could be hit most by the global warming. And while Sunita's parents cannot afford a house or a car, they will take in the dirty air from others' vehicles.

Consumption driven economy is also behind the food shortage and its fallout has been on the environment. About 70% of the cereals grown in the USA are fed to the animals in the meat industry. The extensive monocultures, mechanization, use of chemical fertilizers, extension of agriculture in forest areas and overuse of water have affected the environment. It has caused habitat destruction, loss of biodiversity, and global warming due to methane and food scarcity.

The biggest beneficiaries of consumerism, at least in the short run, are the corporate. A section of the big corporates has also promoted climate change denial to keep accumulating wealth uninterrupted. Oil companies like Shell have allegedly funded a section of scientists and politicians to deny the effects of climate change so that there is no moderation in consumption levels. Such activities have further harmed the cause of environmentalism.

The global community, however, has built a consensus around the idea of sustainable living and development. Right from the Club of Rome to the UNFCCC summit in Paris, the efforts have been to contain climate change by promoting sustainability. Remarkable success of the Montreal Protocol and modest achievements of the Kyoto Protocol are testimonies to that effort. Unfortunately, the global community has skirted the question of consumerism even at this point.

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) of different nations talks about reducing emissions, increasing emission efficiency, peaking emission targets. However, moderation in consumerism, an essential component of sustainability, has been ignored. Similarly, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) have multiple targets to achieve equality, reduce poverty, etc. There has been a consensus on the minimum standards of living but no talk of the ceiling on the standards.

In India, the culture of consumerism entered with the opening of economy in 1991. While still at its infancy, the effects of unsustainable living are already showing up. The Uttarakhand floods were largely driven by 'developmental' activities in the flood plains and fragile Himalayan ecosystem. Even the Chennai flood of 2015 was apparently caused by the greed of builders and promoters, driven by consumerism.

For a developing nation like India, the challenge is even greater. On the one hand she has to sustain the culture of frugal living amidst the onslaught of consumerism, on the other hand she has to ensure that there is social and economic justice through economic progress. This, however, is definitely achievable.

To contain the gluttony of consumerism without compromising the need for development, the world has to firstly define the upper limits of standard of living. While we have tools like Multidimensional Poverty Index, Poverty Line, Depth of Poverty, etc. there is no definition of a sustainable lifestyle. All the nations have to promote the acceptance of such a lifestyle to achieve environmental sustainability.

Additionally, a cultural shift is needed in the global community. The fashion of wealth display has to make way for the fashion of ecological consciousness. A society where green living is promoted will naturally avoid the clutches of consumerism.

The industry and big corporates have a big role to play. They are the ones who promote blatant consumerism through advertisements, rapid churning of new models and glorifying the culture of flaunting. In the longer run, they have to realize that the ever-expanding consumption is not sustainable. A responsible corporate community must tone down the promotion of consumerism.

A living example of how Capitalism can be blended with Socialism and create sustainable living with high standards comes from the Nordic countries. The Nordic Socialism, as it is called, has had higher taxes, cradle-to-grave welfare programs, environmentally sustainable energy programs etc. Denmark is a wind energy surplus country while Sweden imports garbage to run its waste-to-energy programs. Another example is Bhutan which ranks high on Gross National Happiness Index and is a carbon negative country. The global community can follow these models and protect itself from the dangers of rampant consumerism. This will ensure that the cocoa farmers of Cameroon tastes the fruit of his own labour and Sunita's parents can afford a home and her education in a safe and healthy environment.

Information is the Ultimate Power in the Digital Universe of 21st Century

Swapnil Hanmane, IAS (2019)

A young, graduate farmer named Balwant from Marathawada of Maharashtra, one of the water scarce regions knows how to use internet, mobile. He gets daily weather updates, agricultural know how, market prices, information about government schemes, subsidies, etc. on his phone. With this he is cultivating crops scientifically and is known as progressive farmer. He knows the benefits of education and knowledge. Therefore, he sent his daughter and son to nearby city for better education.

On the other hand Hanumant, a young farmer from same Marathawada, who is illiterate and don't know about internet and mobile phone. His crops failed due to lack of inputs. He doesn't know about market, which crop to grow, what are government schemes etc. Because of his rising debts due to continuous droughts, he decided to end his life. His son, daughter and wife are now struggling to survive.

What these two incidents tell us? How the life of an ordinary person is getting affected by different kinds of information? It is not just individual, all societies, governments, nations today are on the cusp of digital revolution. The creators, holders of this digital information are changing the power equation of the world. Let us analyze, what this information is all about? How this information is shaping strength or power in the digital universe of 21st century?

Starting with, we must have quick look about information. Information is nothing but things which we know or can be known. During old Roman period, the geographical information about far off places was considered most essential. During medieval period, information about resources, people, states, military strategy resulted into shaping the world order.

Moreover, when we look back, we all can agree that, it was economic, military, politically strong nations or individuals who were said to be ultimate powerful. European countries ruled the world because of their strong powerful military and strong capital economy.

However, today with rise of digital technology, these aspects are overshadowed by information. Let us first examine, what information can be called as the ultimate power?

Today, with evolution of knowledge economy, older concepts of means of production are changing. For instance, Uber, the longest taxi aggregator does not own a single taxi. Alibaba, largest trading platform does not own single inventory. But these groups are worth of billion dollars within a single decade. What is the reason for this?

The reason for this is, Uber knows who is in the need of taxi, who is ready to provide the taxi service. It is with this information it just connects the two segments of economy. It is similar with Alibaba.

Further, today inventor or creator gets Intellectual property rights. With this the individuals or companies are dominating the world today. For instance, Apple, Microsoft could dominate today only because of creating technical knowhow.

Going further, this IPR, is creating divide between haves and have nots. For example, the Pharmaceutical companies which know about the drugs formula, charges heavy prices for medicines. The companies, countries which own them are becoming powerful at the cost of people who lack this information.

Moreover, the data/information generated has become very fast. The data generated in last two decades is equal to total data generated in life of human (World Bank). With rise of Big Data analysis, artificial intelligence is changing not only economic aspects but political and military aspects also.

Recent incidents of Cambridge Analytica, where information about votes, is used to change the voting behaviour. This can change political power. Today various political parties are using such digital technologies, big data analysis to influence voter. This can change the demographic balance.

Further, the concept of war has also changed. With countries like USA, China inverting in Artificial Intelligence to upgrade military application of AI. With rise of AI, we don't need humans anymore to fight wars. Information about military bases, strategies, technological knowhow can decide today's war results.

Moreover, this information power is not limited to politics and military. Today definitions of resources have changed. Superior brain power is finding new resources. We can cite various examples. Information/knowledge about shell oil/gas has changed the geopolitics of the world.

Further today, the countries like India, having realized the power of information, started to invest in education and human resource development. The digital India program is addressed mainly to take the benefits of information. Aadhar, the largest biometric information platform in the world, is making impact in the public service delivery.

Further digital India program is hoping to reach out to the remotest corners. The farmers like Hunumanta who could not get the information about technological knowhow in agriculture, now can get access. This information is not just property of one individual

today. With growth of digital technology, every individual can access large pool of information from anywhere in the world.

Having discussed how the information has become ultimate power today. Let us also look at the negative fallouts of such information power.

Firstly, the people who don't have access to information can lag behind the race. The people like Hanumanta will not be able to adapt to this world. It can create divide between people. According to various reports, In India, 20% of rural people have access to digital world, while 50% of urban people have digital access. This gap can further enhance inequality in income and opportunities.

Further, the rise of cyber threats, hacking, and frauds can cripple the digital economy. Recent incidence in Tamatara village in Jharkhand, where most of the wealth of village people is snatched away by cyber frauds makes us worry.

Moreover, the attacks on digital infrastructure like Critical Information Infrastructure, Power grids, banking infrastructure can cripple countries. Information about nuclear weapons, their proliferation can lead to massive disasters. Use of digital technology in growth of ISIS, a terrorist organization, has further made challenge.

Thus, information has affected every aspect of human life. Right from the revolutions like Right to information in India which helped to improve the governance, to the revolutions like Aadhar where big data base has created individual identities.

This information or data has become new oil today, like in previous decades; the country which had oil became powerful and wealthy. Today countries that are creating information are getting powerful.

Similarly, we have also challenge to address the gap of haves and have nots. To fill the gap like Balwant and Hanumanta, we need to ensure the digital literacy is improved. Till the time every individual is on board, the combination of physical and digital information access can solve the challenge of this gap. For Hanumanta, we need to provide physical vikas centers at his village.

Further, the data protection rules will ensure the individual's data or information is safeguarded. The draft Data Protection Bill 2018 drafted by B.N.Srikrishna Committee on the lines of European Union's General Data Protection Rules will strengthen the governance of information infrastructure.

Thus, information is essential for survival in 21st century. We need to empower the individuals like Hanumanta, so that they can live life like Balwant.

There is No Education Like Adversity

Swapnil Hanmane, IAS (2019)

In 1945, world learnt the lesson that without strong international organization bringing peace and avoiding wars like World war I and II is not possible. This led to formation of United Nations. Similarly, lessons learnt from black side of imperialism, colonialism and world wars, the countries like India, Egypt and others founded Non Alignment Movement.

Seventy years later, after learning from effects of global warming and climate change, world came together and signed historic Paris climate deal in 2015.

Above examples shows that, adversity like wars, global warming and its effects have taught us the lessons. They educated us. Then we took steps to avoid such adversities in future.

Let us examine how adversities educate us. Why it can be said that there is no education like adversity? Can we also learn without facing adversity? Then finally we will conclude by identifying certain challenges with their solutions.

Starting with, we can sight many examples for arguing how adversity is the best form of education.

Human after facing disasters like tsunami, earthquake, cyclone learnt how to overcome it. What are the causes of such disasters? This enquiry led to creation of early warning systems. India after facing 2004 Tsunami formed Indian early warning system in the Indian Ocean.

Further, after realization of challenges of water scarcity due to misuse, unmindful utilization, pollution of water bodies, we started advocating the better water management practices like watershed management, micro irrigation etc. Weather this is new knowledge or existing one?

The answer for this question is – No. It is old traditional knowledge about better utilization. It is just we have re-learned it.

Further, in India, when we realized farmers are facing crisis due to various issues like crop failure, price fluctuation etc. we came out with various programs and schemes like Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana to help them.

Adversity of corruption, poor governance became the obstacle in the eradication of poverty. Having learned the lesson we came up with Right to Information Act 2015, Lokpal Act 2013 and others to reduce corruption.

Similarly, our experience with ration card which helped the growth of fake beneficiaries, exclusion and inclusion of beneficiaries has made us think for better solution. Hence, came the solution of JAM trinity (Jan-dhan, Aadhar, Mobile).

Having discussed how adversity is the better form of education. However, why it can be said as better form of education, what about education without adversity?

To address this question, we must understand what is education? Education is nothing but getting knowledge about different things and applying this knowledge in day-to-day life. The knowledge achieved without adversity may or may not be applied. The part of ignorance overshadows when one is not faced with the adversity.

To cite the example for the mentioned argument, take example of terrorism. World before attack on WTC in USA, never realized the menace of terrorism. Having faced the brunt of it, in 2001, USA launched all out war against terrorism. This means having awarded about black side of terrorism, people don't apply it in real life unless the adversity is faced by own people, family and society.

Further, some people don't learn from adversaries. What happens to them? Take again same example of terrorism, some countries despite knowing the worst side of it, don't take any action against it. They selectively apply such knowledge.

Selective application like 'your adversity is not my adversity', creates a barrier in the learning. When industries pollute the rivers, they fail to recognize the challenges faced by people downstream.

Moreover, such selective application is also leading to moral crisis in the society. It has also created 'crisis of credibility', for instance, we forgot the lessons of partition in India. The rising intolerance, lynching of minorities has raised the questions over our learning from past incidents and ethos of Indian cultures.

Hence, it is important to learn from such adversity. We have learnt what happens when the institution of governance faces crisis, the light of justice becomes dim. We need to take steps to make our learning to apply to solve such issues.

Having discussed how education out of adversity has helped us to become more learned. Going further to address the barrier into application, we must ensure we don't make any differentiation of adversity.

According to Gandhiji, there is no better education than conscience. When we learn from adversity of others, we can apply same to our personal life.

Society having learnt from menace of terrorism, wars, environmental crisis, poor governance need to take steps collectively to overcome the challenges.

We are optimistic people. Despite USA's walkout of the Paris deal, other countries stood firm to take it forward. Collectively everyone can ensure learning from adversity is not ignored for sake of few.

Finally, the steps like sustainable development goals, which have taken to address the adversity faced by human life right from poverty, hunger to crisis of environment and peace, are the biggest lessons of mankind.

To conclude, we need help of conscience of individuals to implement such lessons without making any differentiation on the basis of individual, society or nation.

Democracy and Socialism are Means to an End, Not the End in Itself

Vaibhav Jain, IRS [(IT) CSE 2017]

On the eve of passage of our constitution, the father of constitution Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar observed:

“On 26th Jan, 1950, our nation is going to enter into the life of contradictions, where the people will have political equality but would lack social and economic equality.”

What was the relevance of this statement? 26th Jan 1950 was the day when our nation India became the world's largest democracy. Still Babasaheb appeared to be apprehensive about the inequality present in our society.

This simply suggests that our constitutional forefathers by adopting democratic form of government with socialist characteristics provided political equality to the citizens. This was envisaged as a tool/means to achieve our real socialistic ends of social and economic equality.

But some unanswered questions still remain. What is the true essence of democracy and socialism? What all ends do we really want to achieve? How democracy and socialism can have the way for those ends? Is it limited to India only? What can be done to ensure that utopian and ideal world?

Democracy in the words of Abraham Lincoln means – for the people, of the people and by the people. It is a philosophy which is people centric, participatory and has a bottom-up approach.

Similarly socialism too is a philosophy which calls for the “ways and means” to achieve “welfare of the masses”.

Both of these values are enshrined in our Preamble which on behalf of the people of India solemnly resolves to make the country a democratic and socialist country. However it never considers it as an end in itself and envisages to provide social, economic and political justice, equality of status and opportunity, liberty of thought, faith and action and fraternity to the people of India.

However our ends are not limited to this. They are multidimensional and capture the hopes and aspirations of the 1.3 billion people in socio-economic, political, cultural and technological domains.

Since its inception, India has been an electoral democracy with first past the poll system. However, this political structure entails various political ends of robust local participation in the form of Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies. Similarly, as citizens of India, people longs for a well balanced structure of fundamental rights and entitlements.

These political ends had social implications in form of attaining social harmony and social justice. It calls for an end of caste distinction and class divides, curbing of communalism and racial discrimination.

The social imprints are also quite apparent in maximizing the capabilities of people. For this health and education are the basis which one desires to be the best. 100% literacy with inculcation of right values and intentions is an end that one seeks. However, this can't be possible without the healthy mind, body and soul. Both these parameters can act as a great lever to make our nation the DEMOGRAPHIC CAPITAL of the world.

Similarly, the economic aspects like removal of poverty, building of infrastructure, attaining inclusive growth and development and having robust macroeconomic fundamentals are some ends that one desires and aspires for. However, these economic ends can't be attained in SILOS.

The technological ends of building scientific temper in our society, boosting R&D in fields of science and technology, bringing new innovations are equally important and vital for other ends.

These ends might seem too much but DEMOCRACY and SOCIALISM can act as a right means to achieve these ends. Let us see how it can lead to this.

Our democracy empowers people with right to vote i. e. right to choose his/her representative. This has led to his political empowerment. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment Act on 24th April 1993 was passed which made PRIs and ULBs a reality.

Further the democratic setup has given space to the 3 organs of the state i.e. legislature, executive and judiciary to empower citizens with fundamental rights and entitlements form time to time. Keshvananda Bharti Case, Maneka Gandhi Case etc. are examples where Judiciary played its part. Similarly by passing Right to Education Act, 2009, Right to Information Act 2005, our legislature ensured various rights to people of India.

In the social domain, the idea of SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY has worked in tandem to bring social equality. These two philosophies led to the origin of concept of reservations which are positive affirmations given to the weaker class to reinforce social justice. The idea of secularism is the origin of communal harmony in our diverse nation.

In health and education too, building right infrastructure like Mid Day Meals, Anganwadi centers, Primary health care centres, free drugs and diagnostics etc. have been possible due to this democratic-socialist regime. The creation of AIIMS, IITs, various government schools with various schemes and policies has led us to achieve near 100% primary school enrollment and 75% literacy rate.

Similarly, the transition from a colonial economy to a robust economy has been the outcome of people led democratic setup of the country. The socialist aspect led to Right to livelihood under MNREGA scheme ensuring economic security.

The technology and science has not been left behind. The development of ISRO and institutes like DRDO, IISc and watershed revolutions like Green revolution under M.S.Swaminathan and white revolution under Verghese Kurien are an outcome of the democratic model of government.

However, the major contention is that the benefits of democracy and socialism are not limited to India only. But it is a scalable concept which can be applicable globally.

USA the oldest democracy is today the world's largest economy. Similarly, China and Russia both socialist countries have attained milestones in other economical and technological fields.

The institutions like UNGA, WTO, IMF, G-20 all follow the democratic model to attain socialist ends of welfare of all.

However, democracy can sometime turn ugly due to its weakness of majoritarianism. Similarly socialism has seen its failure in countries like Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea etc.

But this fact is undisputable that "Democracy is the worst form of Government, except for all the others that have been tried" – Winston Churchill

The need of the hour is to direct the principles of democracy and socialism with values and visions of great leaders. Gandhiji's idea of Trusteeship, Lincoln's idea of equality, Tagore's idea of humanism, Socrates' idea of Rationality, Mandela's idea of non-violence and Teresa's idea of love and peace must be infused in the democratic principles and socialistic philosophy.

The inclusions of all these ideas will not only lead to individual developments of each nation but will also ensure peace, plurality and prosperity for Earth as a whole. It will lead to realization of the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (world as a single family), Sarvdharm Sambhav (equality of all religions) and Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas (welfare of all) all at once to achieve our UTOPIAN ENDS.

A Good Life is One Inspired By Love and Guided By Knowledge

Vaibhav Jain, IRS [(IT) CSE 2017]

How to live a good life? As simple as the question looks, the answer seems to be more complex and complicated. Many scholars, philosophers, saints, gurus, intellectuals have tried to come up with the answer since the dawn of the mankind but were unable to reach a consensus over it. Having said that there are some underlying principles and values that are considered as indispensable ingredients to live a GOOD LIFE.

From the ancient times to the modern age, New Delhi to New York, Alaska to Australia, age of cognitive revolution to that of Artificial intelligence, Gautam Buddha to Dalai Lama, and what not, we have seen and observed numerous examples of Good Life and Bad life. And, what was found in it was the value of True Love and True Knowledge which has been the True Essence of a Good Life.

	Love (Yes)	Love (No)
Knowledge (Yes)	Good Life	Hateful Life
Knowledge (No)	Insignificant Life	Bad Life

But before venturing into the necessities of True Love and True Knowledge to lead a Good Life, one needs to get an idea of what Good Life is?

Good Life: Ultimate Desired End of Every Being

Though on the surface, Good life as an end looks subjective because everyone has their own explanation and idea of what all components make one's life good. But if we still want to bring some objectivity in it, then one can point towards Happiness which is true, ever-lasting, long-term and satisfying as a basic parameter for Good Life.

Looking ahead, there has been a healthy discussion on measuring happiness or quality of well-being as parameters of Good Life. As a result, many internationally recognized pioneer organizations like World Bank, World Economic Forum etc. have come up with the concept of Human Development Index and Social well being Index at National levels. Further certain countries like Bhutan has come up with Gross National Happiness to ensure Good Life.

Now analyzing it at more individual level, one can say that if one's basic needs are fulfilled then one is said to have achieved a Good Life. In this scenario, I firmly believe that true knowledge as a guide and true love as an inspiration can do the job.

True Love: An All Pervasive Inspiration to Lead A Good Life

Love as a value and a concept has numerous meaning similar to life. But one needs to look with deeper and broader perspective. True love resonates with the idea of respect, empathy, tolerance, non-violence, peace, companion, non-discrimination, humanism and fraternity. From individual to international levels the meaning of it changes.

Internationally, the idea of humanism, common brotherhood, the principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, empathy towards weaker section etc. are components of true love. From the likes of countries like Canada, Germany, Scandinavian countries, India, we have seen translation of love into Good life. Canada by asking apology for Komagata Maru incident has won the hearts of Sikhs population who have witnessed the progress of the country.

Similarly, India by promoting its ethos of non-violence and non-cooperation (at time of cold war) has made a deep impact on the global community enhancing its own soft power and global footprint.

At National Level, value and ethos of fraternity, social justice, national consciousness and belongingness can be said as true components of true love. Taking example of Bhutan, Norway, Sweden, and Israel, one can justify that these values have led to Good Life of their residents. Bhutan by ensuring not just socio-economic well being of people, but giving healthy environment (75% of forests) and rejuvenating its cultural heritage has shown people the meaning of true happiness. As a result, it has become a pioneer in providing Good quality of life to its people. Gender parity and social equality norms of Norway have made it a shining star which is evident in its top ranks in Human development Index and Social wellbeing Index. Israel on the other hand, has been really successful in promoting the true National consciousness amongst its citizen. Evidentially it has done wonders in technological and defense field.

Filtering it to more familial and individual level, the idea of true love means the idea of respect for all, helpfulness, and gender equality. Taking the example of Mahaveer Phogat who showed true love for her daughters Geeta Phogat and Babita Phogat by being non-discriminating against them. As a result, they converted this love and brought success in their own life and national honour by winning gold at prestigious common wealth games. At more individual level, love for self i.e. self respect makes a person more confident and caring leading to good life.

But the unanswered question remains whether the notion of true love is an inspiration enough to guide a good life or it should be complemented with true knowledge?

True Knowledge: An All Pertinent Guide for a Good Life

Knowledge as the name suggests refers to the idea of accurate and well directed information about various spheres of life. Here also, true knowledge reflects various ideas i.e. knowledge about self (Know THYSELF), knowledge about ethical conduct (What I ought to do?), knowledge to live healthy life, knowledge to satisfy one's need (differentiating between needs and greed, necessities and wants), knowledge about social, economic and psychological well-being and so on and so forth.

Reflecting upon the life of great visionaries, leaders and reformers, we can get sufficient idea about how true knowledge has led to good life. Gautam Buddha after getting true knowledge of pain and desires led to path of salvation for self. Similarly, Nelson Mandela with true knowledge about non-reciprocity won the hearts of not only white population but also natives of his country.

Mother Teresa, Nobel peace prize winner after guided by true knowledge of service towards mankind elevated many from cruel curse of Leprosy and attained the self-actualization. Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi after gaining true knowledge of non-violence and Satyagraha guided millions to the idea of good life.

Having established the positive correlation between true love and knowledge and good life, the question remains how to cultivate these components in oneself?

Cultivating Love and Attaining Knowledge: Path to Good Life

Cultivating love requires constant effort of looking things from broader perspective. It involves getting inspired by great readers, thinkers and reformers. Learning compassion from Mother Teresa, vasudev Kutumbkam from Indian Vedas, Fearlessness from Malala Yousafzai, Humanity from Dalai Lama, non-violence from Mahatma Gandhi.

Similarly, attaining true knowledge requires persistent efforts too. It involves guidance from teachers, parents and mentors. It includes self-introspection and reflection, learning and re-learning via application of ideas, cultivating creativity in self etc.

Thus, this idea of true love and true knowledge can be a guide to lead a Good Life. Once, these are indicated, one can expect to live a peaceful and satisfying life which resonates with the idea of Mask Karen:

"Only as high as I reach,
Can I grow
Only as far as I seek,
Can I go
Only as deep as I look,
Can I see
Only As much as I dream,
Can I be."

Water Water Everywhere, Not A Drop To Drink

Swapnil Hanmane, IAS (2019)

The city of Chennai faced one of the worst droughts in the country such that water had to be transported by rail: virtually bringing the city to a standstill, despite being a coastal city situated close to the sea. The same city was devastated by floods about 3 years ago. At the same time, parts of Maharashtra like Sangli, Satara and parts of Vidarbha are battling with serious flooding. These are the same regions where more than 95000 farmers have committed suicides in the last 10 years due to drought.

Isn't it a paradox that the same places are facing both the problems simultaneously? Water water everywhere, not a drop to drink. The island archipelago of Maldives was brought to its knees in 2015, when its desalination plants stopped working, virtually cutting off its supply of even drinking water. Indian Navy intervened with Operation Cactus supplying water in ships.

Earth's surface is 70% water covered in various forms like oceans, snow cover, polar ice, glaciers etc. giving it the name 'blue planet'. Rising sea levels have been the cause of worry for smaller islands nations and even countries like Bangladesh, India etc. Excess of rains have been creating havoc very frequently as witnessed in Kerala, Uttarakhand and Nepal floods. Thus, no doubt exists that there is abundance of water on our planet, perhaps much more than our needs and requirements.

Ironically at the same time, we are in the mid of the worst ever water crisis in the history.

NITI Aayog's composite water management Index indicates more than 21 major cities of India will run out of ground water by 2020. A recent report of ICIMOD on Himalayan glaciers warns of serious glacier retreat and threat to Perennial River flooding whole of South and South East Asia. A glacier in Norway recently had its funeral done officially. WHO Report indicates more than 58% of water consumed in Asia and Africa exceeds the permissible levels of toxic metals.

We are sure heading towards a man-made disaster, and knowingly or unknowingly are a part of it.

A very obvious inference from the above facts is that the problem does not limit to water availability rather than distribution (both spatial and temporal) and the quality of

it. It is important to understand the underlying causes behind the skewed supply as well as the quality degradation.

A part of the reason for the non-availability is natural variation of rainfall, and river distribution. Historically, great civilizations prospered around river valleys like Nile, Ganges etc. owing to easy availability of water. Climate change has indeed taken a toll on the natural patterns severely increasing the frequency of extreme climatic conditions like cyclones, droughts and floods. But the major blame lies to the anthropogenic causes.

The rampant pollution of both the surface and ground water resources has rendered them unusable. Lakes, rivers and oceans have become the global garbage bin with more than 70% waste ending in them. The efficient discharge from industries, runoff from agricultural fields and untreated sewage from urban areas have led to contamination of not just fresh water but also the surroundings.

The unplanned urban development and growth of slums has led to encroachment of water bodies and lakes, wetlands in urban areas. Bangalore, once called the city of lakes with more than 130 water bodies has hardly less than 20 left. The Varthur and Bellandur Lake often catch fire in the foams.

Further, the modern metropolitan centers like Mumbai, Chennai, New York etc. have unusually high demand for water, owing both to the huge population and the modern urban lifestyle. The industrial centers like textile, power plant etc. need huge water supplies and often end up consuming precious drinking water. Agriculture, though important for food security of the globe, depends on ground water for 70% of its needs and is being heavily exploited thanks to free electricity and subsidies.

Livestock sector, consumes more than half of total water supply of the world, as per a WEF report of 2016, thus having serious repercussions and domino effect on the entire world.

The foremost and most visible effect is in the form of poverty, in the sub-Saharan Africa, Asian countries and Latin America. Low incomes due to heavy dependence on Agriculture, coupled with diseases due to contaminated water further aggravate the dreadful situation as indicated by the Lancet Report.

Women bear a large brunt of this, having to walk long distance to fetch water, along with children who face stunted and wasted growth, various social tensions and conflicts arise between haves and have not's in the society.

In the economic sphere, all the sectors- primary, secondary as well as tertiary heavily rely on water and effects on GDP of country are evident. The political scenario has taken new turns with water assuming new roles in both domestic and international affairs. India's relations with Pakistan, China and Bangladesh heavily focus on river water sharing agreements. In the domestic arena, federalism has been effected due to interstate conflicts very often as recently seen in Cauvery issue of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The environment and biodiversity has been negatively impacted both due to water shortage and contamination. While water shortage leads to deforestation, loss of natural river flow pattern desertification etc. Contamination leads to death of animals and often ends up with bio-accumulation and bio-magnification in the food chain.

Before the situation worsens and impacts become further serious, there is an urgent need to address the issue holistically with a two pronged approach, firstly looking at ways to ensure 'water for all' and secondly to mitigate pollution and focus on conservation measures.

At an individual level, we follow the principle of 4R's- Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to ensure judicious use of water in our homes and offices. Water harvesting techniques must be installed in homes and used for landscaping and toilet water.

At the level of society, civil organizations, NGO'S and other youth groups must come forward to launch cleaning campaigns for rivers and lakes. 'Run for rivers' launched by 'Isha foundation' is an appreciable step. Role of schools in teaching children the value of water conservation will take us a long way.

At a local level, decentralized water conservation ponds, check dams must be created, rivers must be desilted and lakes deepened. Such activities may be undertaken under MGNREGA. Use of traditional methods like Baori in Rajasthan, Ahar-Pyne in Bihar, Kyre in Karnataka, Bhandares in Maharashtra must be promoted. Laporiya village of Rajasthan with chukkas created by waterman of India – Rajendra Singh presents a good example.

At national level, there is a need for both strict laws as well as behavioural change campaigns to address the issue. Sewage treatment plant under Swach Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Shakti Abhiyan and Namami Gange Mission etc. are all welcome steps. Pricing of water on a partial basis may be tested as suggested by NITI Aayog. Water efficient methods in agriculture like micro-irrigation, zero budget natural farming need to be promoted.

Improved international collaboration and treaties like Stockholm Convention and Rotterdam convention for waste disposal in sea, needs implementation. Use of technology like desalination plants, OTEC plant in Lakshadweep, etc. will further supplement the efforts.

Water has been accorded the status of 'Varuna' God and mother Goddess Ganga in India. The best of civilizations cannot survive without water and as was the case with Harappans. We must all come together and work towards water management.

'Jal hi Jeevan Hai and Jal Hai to Kal Hai'

Tourism: Can This be the Next Big Thing For India?

Nav Goel, IRAS (2014)

"If there is a heaven on earth, it's here, it's here"

Amir Khusrau

Though these words of Amir Khusrau captures the sheer beauty of Kashmir in particular but this famous line is applicable to the whole of India as well. India is endowed with diverse cultures, religions, physical features, climates etc. and that makes a unique blend which positions India as one of sought-after tourist destination.

Tourism roughly contributes around 7% of GDP of India. And still there is a lot of potential which is left untapped. Our exotic beaches of Goa, snow-capped mountains of Himachal, tiger reserves of Madhya Pradesh have the potential to be transformed to Miami, Switzerland and Jungles of Maasai Mara respectively. Besides this, religious, medical and wellness tourism gives a further boost to India's tourism. Though there are some challenges in our tourism sector but we can overcome them. So now, we will see how Tourism can be the next big thing for India!

Tourism Potential: What India is endowed with?

Religious Tourism: India has been a home to almost all major religions of the world. Buddhism and Jainism originated in India while Christianity, Judaism and Islam came very early to India. In fact, as per the oral legend St Thomas the Apostle landed in Kerala around 52 CE and he was welcomed on shore by a flute-playing Jewish girl. So technically Christianity came to India before it reached Europe. This places India in a very unique position. No other country has such a vast religious heritage.

Bodhgaya in Bihar and Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh receives a huge number of tourists every year from around the world. Further for most of the Indians, tourism is synonymous to pilgrimage. Many domestic tourists travel around the year based on their faiths. 'Char-Dham Yatra, 12 Jyotirlingas and 51 Shakti-Peeths' have their own importance in Hinduism and moves many devotees across the continent. Further Urs Festival held in places of major Sufi Orders also attracts many domestic as well as international tourists. Like Urs of Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti attracts more than 5 lakh people every year and there are many Urs like that in India. Further Varanasi, the city of Lord Shiva, also receives many international tourists owing to its cultural heritage.

Leisure and Adventure Tourism: Backwaters of Kerala, Beaches of Goa, Sand Dunes of Jaisalmer, Palaces of Jodhpur, Ruins of Hampi, Architectural heritage of Agra and Delhi, Treks of Himachal, adventures of Uttarakhand etc. lures tourists from all over the world. The unique thing about the International Tourists is that they visit for a longer period like 1-2 months. This results in boosting our economy by multiplicative factor.

Medical and Wellness Tourism: India receives a lot of International tourists owing to its economical treatment facilities, expert surgeons and one of the most caring nursing culture in the world. The fluency of doctors in English, the cheaper treatment which is approximately 75% less costly as compared to USA, experience of doctors in executing complex surgeries outside India makes it a most sought after destination for medical treatment.

Further wellness therapies of Yoga, Ayurveda, Siddha, Reiki, Meditation along with the Spiritual philosophy has been a way of life in India for so many years and westerners have been looking upto India for salvation and alternative healing. Even late Apple Inc. Co-founder Steve Jobs came to India seeking to find his inner self and longing to be enlightened. The cities of Kovalam, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Varanasi thus have a lot of untapped potential.

Wild-life Tourism: India is a land of various wild-life habitats and also has diversity in terms of species. One-Horned Rhino of Kaziranga, Asiatic Lions of Gir, Tiger Reserves of Madhya Pradesh, the Valley of Flowers and unique diversity of Nilgiris have brought many footfalls of wildlife enthusiasts. Now wild-life tourism has emerged into a separate field of tourism. These places of natural diversity also have a lot of unlocked potential to lure tourists of all ages, which needs to be showcased.

What is locking down this potential: How Tourism can become a next big thing in India?

In the last few paragraphs we have seen that there is lot of potential in Tourism Sector of India. But still it is not as big as it should be. What are the reasons behind that? Let's have a look at that.

Lack of Infrastructure and a perception battle is a major challenge for Indian Tourism. Hotels connectivity, human resources, hygiene, health facilities, etc. are largely under-developed in India.

The major international tourist destinations like Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Varanasi, Tiger Reserves of Madhya Pradesh and many other places still don't have proper connectivity via roads or airports. Nowadays people want to enjoy the journey as much as they want to relish the destination. But the scarcity and quality of Indian Roads is a roadblock in unlocking the potential of these tourism destinations. Many tourists eliminate the not so well connected places out of their itinerary, thus harming their economic prospects.

Further local transport in and around tourist places is also a problem area as taxi drivers also sometimes play mischievous and there is no prompt grievance redressal.

Further there is not much standardisation in services at the tourist places. For example Foreign Tourists either take a personal guide or want an audio system guide to visit an architectural heritage for example, Mysore Palace or Taj Mahal. Guides often quote very high prices to foreign tourists and audio guides are often not working. This carries a bad image through word of mouth. In addition to this, there is a general perception about lack of hygiene in food and drinking water which is because of uncontrolled mushrooming of food joints near the tourist places.

The famous temples of North-India can often be seen poorly managed due to the lack of crowd control mechanisms and incompetent coordination on the part of management. Further they are surrounded by beggars. Many fraudulent Pandits can be seen who promise the tourists to take them to temple in half an hour in exchange of money. These issues cause trouble to all the visitors and harms India's image.

Also it is often seen that, foreigners, owing to their white skin, height and different clothes, stand out and attract attention. This is particularly a problem for women travellers. And Indian men often stare at them and make unwanted advances, often including groping and photographing. The problem here is lack of prompt grievance redressal mechanism for foreigners.

Besides that, unfortunately some of the most beautiful places in India like scenic beauty of Kashmir, diverse North-Eastern Part of India, and wildlife areas of Chhattisgarh have been struggling with their violent past and present instability, the perception and uncertainty about violence.

In addition to above issues, India has also not been very successful to portray itself as a desirable tourist destination because of lack of marketing. Self-Image correction exercise is required to tackle all the negative publicity it gets because of exaggeration by tourists from abroad.

How to unlock this inherent potential: Indian Tourism can be a big thing!

Both Central and respective State Governments need to make conscious efforts in improving the connectivity to major tourist destinations. Many steps have been taken in this direction, for example, Central Government has gone ahead with recognising major Tourist Circuits like Buddhist Circuit, Desert Circuit etc. Some years ago, there was no direct train to Vaishno Devi, a major tourist destination. Now a dedicated and special train is launched which has facilitated many tourists. Steps like these are sine qua non for our emerging tourism sector.

Further all the Architectural Heritage destinations should be standardised in terms of facilities and price. Foreigners come with a lot of expectations and unless we meet them, word of mouth publicity won't work in our favour. There should be grievance redressal

Booths and Apps in all the major tourism cities and it should be given wide publicity in social media as well as locally. This will work as a two prong strategy, firstly in making tourists aware and secondly creating a fear factor in local residents.

Places like Wildlife Reserves need to upgrade their facilities. For example, some modern adventure sports can be organised in safe area but in the near vicinity, small restaurants and stay points can be established, so as to give an altogether different experience. Initiatives of Kruger National Park of South Africa can be emulated in this field.

In comparison to domestic tourists, foreigners usually want to spend more time at a particular place. Cultural events like dances, songs, shows can be organised so that they can be motivated to stay for one extra day and create a virtuous economic cycle.

Intensive marketing campaign like "Incredible India" should be organised on all social media platforms about the unique things of a particular place along with bringing all the bookings online will help increase the reach.

Conclusion

India with its belief of "Atithi Devo Bhavah" and all its diversity is very well positioned to catapult its tourism to next level. With increasing middle class incomes and an upward trend of travelling in India and foreigners increasing focus on wellness amidst all the chaos, it's high time that India develops its tourism infrastructure. This along with innovative offerings and concerted campaign can definitely make it a market leader in Tourism.